

# **Big and Pumped: Embodied Masculinity in Homosocial Sporting Environments**

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## **Abstract**

Queering male homosocial sporting environments and the relationship to masculinity and the body, is a multidimensional under-researched area of knowledge which experiences particular Queered epistemological challenges. This thesis aims to consider the relationship that men have with their bodies in homosocial sporting environments. Acknowledgement is given to the bonds that men make in defining their masculinity; this includes the role of the body and the environment in which this body exists.

Ethical approval was granted from the University of East London. Participants were recruited via a poster campaign, or targeted via email. Four homosexual and four heterosexual sportsmen were recruited into the study, representing a homogenous sample, in line with Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis. The data was acquired through semi-structured interviews; these were digitally recorded, with each interview lasting approximately one hour. The digitally recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim, and prepared for analysis utilising Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) methodology.

Through the analysis and interpretation of the data, two superordinate themes with seven subordinate themes evolved from the data. The first superordinate theme 'Embodied Unrest of the 'Bulked' Torso: Muscle Ideology and Performative Violence' has three subordinate themes. The second superordinate theme, 'Performative Masculinities Embodied in Homosocial Environments' accumulated four subordinate themes.

In brief, three significant findings evolved as a result of the thematic data. This included the impact of bulked muscles e.g. the biceps, as a representation of power, while at the same time the gaining of insights into how the body plays a significant role in defining masculinity and at time hierarchical disenfranchisement to other men. A second finding resulted in the acknowledgement of a new tenant of Masculine Capital; this was entitled 'Cock-Supremacy'. The final finding

highlighted discourse that suggested how sporting-footwear shapes how men bond and define masculinity in homosocial environments.

In conclusion, this research gains new insight into the role of embodiment within a homosocial sporting context. The changing nature of Masculine Capital is also in flux, but consideration turns to new undiscovered ways in which sporting-footwear is shaping men's definitions of masculinity. The results gained from this study not only impact on sports sociology, but also have a significant importance in gender/masculinity/sex/uality studies.

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## **Dedication**

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Dedicated to Ben Morriss-Roberts

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION TO THE THESIS

#### 1.1 Contextualising the Problem

The recent experiences of three British sportsmen in the public eye, Nigel Owens, Gareth Thomas and Ben Cohen, pose significant questions about the relationship between heterosexuality, body politics and homophobia in, same-sex sporting environments. Owens 'came out' in 2007 and continues to be involved in professional rugby as an official international referee. Thomas divorced his wife in 2009, retired from his professional rugby career and officially announced his homosexuality shortly after. Ben Cohen retired from his professional rugby career in 2011 and in the same year became a prominent gay-rights advocate, launching his anti-homophobia foundation 'Stand Up' (<http://www.standupfoundation.com>). Whilst this thesis is not solely about rugby, these sportsmen exemplify the ways in which masculine embodiment mediates experiences of homophobia in all-male environments, and their experiences will help to illustrate the context informing the research questions which underpin this thesis.

When asked about the 'coming out' of Owens, Cohen - a heterosexual, muscle-bound, rugby player - stated 'It's all good, because he's in a very masculine sport and an official' (Fulvio, 2009, p.59). Thomas was described by the *Daily Mail* (Mail Online, 2009) as having '...one of the fiercest reputations on the field, and a row of missing front teeth to prove it. At 6ft 3in and 16st of pure muscle, his masculinity has always been an absolute given'. Owens however, never seems to be described by the press in an overtly masculine way, and is generally known to be the only 'out' professional referee in the world.

Firstly, masculinity here appears to be a fragile concept with contradictory meanings. In this example, Cohen considers rugby to be the most masculine sport, and if a player 'comes out' in this sport he must nonetheless embody the

qualities of heteronormative masculinity, and is therefore safe within this environment. It could be argued that the sport itself is guaranteeing masculinity and providing ideals for men to adhere to. This masculinity seems to offset the threat posed by overt homosexuality: here masculine embodiment stands for heteronormativity and over-shadows the threat of homosexuality and feminisation. What does this mean for feminised homosexual or heterosexual men who cannot perform these traditional heteronormative qualities within same-sex environments? And what about men who participate in other sports? Are they not seen as equally masculine? Significantly, the defining of Thomas' masculinity appears to focus on his muscular body and his lack of teeth (violence and masculinity appear to go hand in hand).

The body in rugby is often defined by large, well-built men, which supports the traditional notion of masculinity in sport, and Cohen and Thomas are no exceptions to this rule. Thomas has been described above and Cohen, is described as a 'hirsute hulk of a rugby player... and a 31 year old, 6ft 4inch piece of hotness' (Fulvio, 2009, p.52), and thus seems to embody the hypermasculine representation of heterosexual masculinity.

Gaining and presenting a traditional pumped-up muscular body appears to be an excellent cover for men in all-male sports to avoid scrutiny of their sexuality and in this sense it is significant to reflect upon the typically conservative *Daily Mail's* regard for Thomas. As a cover model for two gay men's lifestyle magazines, *Attitude* and *Gay Times*, Cohen discusses his body in one interview and states, 'Seriously, I don't think I've got a good body. And that's not cause I want you to say I have. I don't look in the mirror and go 'Fucking hell Benny, good body.' I look at it and go, actually, I need to lose some weight, I need to do some more work and I'll go to the gym and I'll try, I don't really think I have a good body' (Fulvio, 2009). There are two issues at hand here, firstly the struggle to reach an elusive embodied ideal and secondly, we could ask who is policing his ideal body type. It could be argued that heterosexual men such as Cohen, are forming the

foundations for other men to aspire to, thus Cohen is subconsciously creating a policed form of the body ideal. Therefore as a heterosexual man, Cohen is enforcing heteronormative ideas for other sports men to follow? Is this the case in other sports also?

Gareth Thomas only came out as gay as he retired from rugby, despite a successful career and displaying evident masculine embodiment: Did his embodiment and prowess in rugby protect him from homophobia, or are there limits to the protection offered by pumped muscle mass? It seems unlikely that Ben Cohen has had his sexuality questioned due to the size of his muscles and the nature of his profession. However, we have to pose the question of how other men in other sports feel about their bodies in relation to masculinity? What impact does this have on the voyeuristic gaze of other men, both heterosexual and homosexual? Cohen is a pin up model for the gay community and admits that he finds it a compliment to be admired by men (Fulvio, 2009). Colman (2012) in an article about Cohen in *The New York Times* succinctly hypothesises on the power of his anti-homophobia campaign by stating there are two strains of power emerging from Cohen's appeal 'one about accepting gays, the other about accepting gaze' (Colman, 2012). This leads us to question how men engage in the locker room and whether the role of the homoerotic gaze has an impact on policing embodied sexuality in sport.

Furthermore, how do these three men experience homophobia and the policing of masculine practices within same-sex environments? How does this relationship impact on their experience of embodiment? It could be argued that these complex interrelated issues are a consequence of homophobia within same-sex sporting environments. Why is it that Thomas lived a life as a heterosexual man for so long, before coming out after his divorce and the end of his professional career? It also begs the question why did Ben Cohen initiate the start up of his 'stand up' foundation? These two men must have felt that the world of rugby, in the homosocial setting, was not a safe place to be homosexual.

Therefore, the homophobic discourse and experiences of embodied masculinity would have policed heterosexual and heterosexual men to enforce a heterosexually/heteronormative form of masculinity. However, Owens is the exception to this rule, and is one of the only professional 'out' rugby players in the world. Owens argues that the reason homophobia is still rife in the sporting setting is because there are not enough homosexual sports idols for young men to admire (Barkham, 2009). He continues to argue that 'other sports like football would benefit from a gay champion in the same way that former Welsh captain Gareth Thomas has promoted gay rights in the rugby world since revealing his sexuality' (Morgan, 2012). In an interview, Hunt (Williams, 2009, p.64) a spokesperson of Stonewall, suggests that it is not the players that have a problem with coming out, it is often the managers: '..they [the managers] come from a different generation, and don't know how to manage the situation'. It can be noted that actually policing masculine identity has a cascade affect here, if the managers don't approve, the sportsmen will probably not approve either.

Concluding here, it is evident that masculinity, the body and same sex-sporting environments are intrinsically fraught with tension, struggling to negotiate how masculinity is understood and policed. This triadic relationship between Cohen, Thomas and Owens provides the foundation through which this study deals with the problems of masculinity.

These three men are not alone in understanding the role that masculinity in the sporting setting plays in shaping them. It has also shaped and intrigued the author for many years, ultimately leading to the creation of this research thesis.

### **1.1.1 Reflexive Narratives/ Historiography**

Gauging the positioning of the researcher and the significance of reflexivity is an intrinsic part of qualitative research (Tindall, 1994; Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). Utilising reflexivity, two stories will now be exposed giving insight into the socio-cultural background of the positioning of the researcher.

The following relates specifically to my own lived experiences and the cultural norms, which have shaped my previous knowledge and which clearly influenced my work in this study.

Growing up in South Wales, rugby was a compulsory part of Welsh education. It was a sport that filled my childhood and teenage years not with pleasure, but with stomach aches, sick notes and a disdain for team sports. Rugby was also the medium through which my identity was apparent to everyone else in school apart from me; how was I supposed to know that if you didn't like rugby at eleven years of age you were supposedly gay! It wasn't helped by the fact that by the age of fourteen, I was six foot two and looked like someone that should have been good at rugby. These years became a tormented time as rugby was enforced on me, and my willingness to participate became more and more fraught with anxiety.

There are key memories that have stuck with me over the years in relation to rugby and these have impacted not only on my childhood but on my adulthood as well.

My first and most vivid memory was the realisation at around fourteen years of age that I was sexually attracted to my rugby teacher. Mr X was not particularly tall but had thick, muscular and hairy legs, he had huge muscular arms and a defined muscular torso. He had an impressive beard with a moustache that was thick and dark in colour. On one particular day after a rugby training session, we all had to shower together, including Mr X. We were naked in the shower room together, and this was the first time that I saw Mr X undressed. It was at that moment that I realised that I found him sexually attractive. He was the epitome of masculinity and manliness, and it was on that day that my sexual awareness of men and team sports came to light. Unfortunately, it didn't make rugby any easier to engage in, it seemed to make it more difficult because I was becoming aware of players that were attractive to me. These men were good at sports and demonstrated a masculine dominance in sport and the locker room. I observed

these men and they became the people that I admired; and ultimately the type of man I wanted to be. As I grew up, the men that taught me rugby became the foundation for all the men I found attractive and dated as an adult. Ironically, I dated a professional rugby player who was in the closet at the time; he couldn't face the rugby community and be open about his sexuality. At that time, my professional rugby player boyfriend used to confide in me and tell me about other professional rugby players who also denied their sexuality. These closeted sportsmen wished to hide behind the guise of heteronormative masculine behaviour on the field and in front of other team members.

Interpreting this lived experience, it could be argued that the actual mask exposed here, is handling the situation of admiration and eroticism in the locker room environment. The rugby teacher in the narrative is the ultimate embodiment of masculinity, and a product of agency and the erotic schoolboy gaze. Through the exposure of the body, the commodity of embodying masculinity becomes a preoccupation of boys striving to emulate this hegemonic masculine status.

This above brief narrative informs this thesis in three ways; by examining firstly, the role of sexual awakening (sexuality); secondly, the role of embodiment and sport; and, finally, homosociality.

For example as argued by (Eng, 2006a) a burgeoning sexual awareness demonstrates that due to identity exclusion, it is also joined by a specific sexual alienation noted by other men in that homosocial environment. The organisation of homosociality and male bonding environments are considered to be nonsexual (Eng, 2006a). However, this example demonstrates that as a 'closeted' young homosexual man, these are in fact policed homoerotic environments. This raises the question: do other men in this setting police masculinity and the shaping of it? It could be argued that this example disagrees with a portion of current thinking and literature (see Eng, 2006a). In fact the role of the body, and the image of the hegemonic sporting masculine male, appears to provide the male bonding



experiences that can alter a homosexual man's perception of desired masculinity and it could be argued that this form of butch masculinity is an image of bulked heteronormativity.

My second memory of note was at eleven years of age when my mum took me to buy my first pair of rugby boots. I was taken to the now defunct Woolworths in our local high street in Porthcawl, where my Mum made me buy cheap, plastic rugby boots of no brand. My parents didn't have lots of money to spend on expensive clothing (I had three brothers and a sister living at home at that time) and I knew that these cheap rugby boots would be a source of ridicule in school: I knew that rugby boots should be Nike or Puma or something with a brand. Under protest I was made to wear these boots to sports lessons. The anxiety of engaging in rugby and wearing these rugby boots made me feel ill for the whole weekend beforehand. I remember taking them out of my bag in the changing room and someone shouting 'what the fuck are those gayboy?' I remember my heart pounding, fearful that I might be beaten up for wearing the wrong kind of shoes. I never was, but these boots were ridiculed for years. My parents would never buy me expensive rugby boots, as they felt there was no point in investing in something that I hated in the first place. These boots became a replacement of my sexuality, my fear of team sports and male bonding (or lack of it) within the homosocial environment.

Reflecting on this life experience, there are three main thematic factors that can be drawn from this scenario and these are the notions: (1) threat/jeopardy, (2) conformity, (3) mediating social environments and, (4) commodities. Each of these factors will be considered in a little more detail in the following.

In this instance, threat/jeopardy takes insight from the fear of existing/participating in male homosocial environments. While existing in the sporting environment the role of conforming exists, enforcing expectations within the locker room/sporting setting, and exacerbating the existence of fear and

jeopardy. These issues are embedded within the idea of mediating social environments, environments which include the home and the all-male environment.

The home environment reflects the emotional relationship of managing bonds with the mother, and the impact that the rugby boots have. It is here that the role of commodity and value initially arises, whereby lessons learnt are played out on the body. The body in this instance is connected to the feet/footwear, whereby they are marked as a contested object in the domestic setting. This example demonstrates commodity and value in two ways; (1) it shows that my mother had a lack of money, (2) that as a teenager I didn't have any money, which reinforced that my burgeoning masculinity/homosociality is curtailed by feminisation as a mummy's boy. Thus, it is a common experience that mummy's boys are a representation of homosexuality and thus homophobia through the commodity and value of the footwear.

These described life narratives have shaped this thesis in two distinct ways. Firstly, the role of clothing or footwear in this particular memory has a correlation with identity and self. This maps onto particular insight gained by Flugel (1930) who argues that clothes (and shoes) are an extension of self. It could be suggested that even at that age of thirteen the role of branding and product placement was at the forefront of my concerns. It is significant that, subliminally, appropriate footwear sends out messages to other boys/men. This example pays particular attention to Rossi's (1977) literature reflecting upon the role of Podolinguistics (the signifying language of feet and shoes), and with Rossi (1977) in mind, we turn to Gill (2006) who states that appropriate sporting footwear is synonymous with attractiveness, popularity and success. It could be argued that as a child, the author made an unconscious connection between the meanings that cheap rugby boots would have in the sporting setting, therefore moulding this body of work, and bringing this concept to the fore. This transforms lived

experiences into hypothesising; do other men experience a similar sporting-shoe crisis?

The second concept that can be taken from this narrative, which has shaped this body of work, is the role of homosociality (Sedgwick, 1985) and homophobia. It is evident from the author's reflexive narrative that the locker room environment in this example became one of fear and homophobic abuse through the wearing of incorrect footwear. It could be argued that the author existing in the homosocial setting, while being young and in the closet was a fearful experience in itself. Therefore, it could be said that to understand the homophobic homosocial environment, one must learn a code. This code includes knowing how and what is affected when men police masculinity and identity in the homosocial environment.

Wolf *et al.* (2001) argue that sport rejects homosexuality, and reinforced heteronormative behaviours. Considering the narrative as a whole it could be read that podolinguistically, cheap boots indicated a refusal to conform to the social convention of masculinity. The cheap boots become a threat to masculine order, therefore the boots become linked to conformity in homosocial environments, and thus a symbol of homophobia and a lack of interest in sport. Pronger (1990) argues that all heterosexual men enjoy sport and with this in mind, the example points to the author as a subordinate masculinity.

Drawing on these personal narratives and the triangulated relationship between Cohen, Thomas and Owens, it is evident that masculinity policed by heterosexuality, body politics and homophobia in sport are problematic. In short this thesis aims to probe deeper into the complexities of masculinity presented in sport.

## **1.2 Introduction**

As we move into the introduction of this thesis we have gained a brief insight into the proposed dilemma of masculinity utilising Gareth Thomas, Nigel Owens, Ben Cohen and reflexive narratives (integral to an Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis study) to illuminate the thematic content that will evolve in this thesis. As this chapter moves forward, acknowledgement will be made to 'Setting the Scene' (1.2.1), which will provide synopsis as to what this thesis is about.

Forming the foundations for understanding the general 'Aims and Significance of the Study' (1.3) are needed before looking deeper into this body of work to set out the 'Primary Research Questions' (1.3.1). Each Primary Research Question is positioned with a synopsis detailing the reasoning behind the questions posed.

Once the Primary Research Questions have been stated, focus is then drawn to the theoretical epistemologies that will be used to embed the research Embedding Theory (1.4.). Masculinity Theory and Queer Theory will help to support the aims of the research. Once the research questions are stated, and the theoretical perspective exposed, a description of the 'Research Design' (1.5) is given. It is here that insight is given to the overall structure of the research design, including the role of Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA). Three distinct areas are discussed relating to research design; (1) the recruitment and role of the participants in the study, (2) the instrumentation used to collect the data and (3) the procedure that will be followed. Finally concluding statements are provided in the summary of this Chapter (1.6).

### **1.2.1 Setting the Scene**

In short, this research is about how men make sense of masculinity in relation to their bodies in homosocial environments. This includes the discussion of how men police other men through heteronormative structures that are inherently interwoven in sport culture. This will be obtained utilising an Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis approach, which has a focus on participant lived

experience.

Due to the nature of men policing social structures, this thesis will look at how marginalised masculinities are formed, and therefore try to make sense of the hierarchies that exist in these homosocial sporting settings. Therefore, Queer Theory has been used in order to deconstruct the power relations, allowing subordinate embodied masculinities to have a voice, and giving insight into the shifting patterns of policed masculinity. In dismantling these relationships this thesis will look at the body as performative tool of embodying masculinity. To explore this concept in more detail this research will turn to sporting footwear and consider the impact this has in shaping masculinities in heteronormative policed environments.

In summary, this research will consider masculinity policed by heterosexuality, body politics and homophobia in sport, all in same sex sporting environments.

### **1.3 Aims and Significance of the Study**

By 'Setting the Scene' (1.2.1) this thesis will consider the main aims of the study, while considering the significance of these aims. These aims will include many areas that have been located as gaps in knowledge.

The first aim of this thesis will be to contribute and build upon current theoretical thinking, and existing academic literature within Masculinity and Queer Theory in sport. It is hoped that through theorizing and dissecting masculinities in sport, deeper insight will be gained into the hierarchical structures that emerge in all male homosocial settings.

This work also aims to bring new knowledge, and bridge gaps in Queer, Masculinities and sporting literature, by utilising these epistemological stances. The current literature reflecting and interpreting the sporting masculinities, fails to truly pull apart the Queer perspective. It could be argued that Masculinity Theory simplifies the issue, simply by interpreting hierarchies but not power

relations. In addition, it is suggested that by failing to take into the account the Queered sporting perspective, the silenced masculinities fail to have a voice. This body of work aims to give these silenced a voice.

This body of work also aims to uncover the role of policing masculinities in the homosocial setting. This work aims to consider what role men have in structuring homosocial environments, taking into account why men have to perform with a mask to pass as heterosexual, even if they are. With this in mind, this work also aims to consider the role of heteronormativity and its impact on masculinity, heterosexuality and homosexuality.

This work also takes into consideration the role of performing as a sportsman. This means considering the role of embodiment and interpreting how men within homosocial environments navigate their bodies. This includes the role of how they cover their bodies, in particular in this thesis sporting footwear is seen to play an important role in how men perform their chosen sport, and how those chosen sporting shoes impact on other men and their understanding of masculinity.

Within Masculinity Theory, Masculine Capital (David and Brannon, 1976) plays an informative role. This body of work aims to understand how Masculine Capital in homosocial sporting environments will be deconstructed through a Queer Theoretical perspective.

This body of work also aims to bring new methodological approaches and epistemologies together. Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis is also an underutilised methodological approach however; more significantly Queer Theory and IPA have never been integrated simultaneously in the same piece of research. This body of work will be the first piece of empirical research to undertake such an integrated methodological approach.

In summary, it is hoped that, with the theoretical framework contributing to new knowledge, it will support the findings and outcomes of the Primary Research

Questions, which will also fill a gap in current knowledge. This includes the role of homosociality from a Queer Theoretical perspective and the impact this has on embodiment within the homosocial setting. Moreover this body of work anticipates that significant interpretations of masculinity, and the roles of Masculinity Theory and Masculine Capital within those homosocial settings, will also provide new and significant insight. It will be interesting to note the interpretive power that embodiment and homosociality exerts on the performative language of footwear within homosocial environments, and what the readings of this language will be. Integration of Podolinguistics into the sporting setting, and the knowledge gained from developing this concept further will definitely develop and bridge a gap in knowledge.

### **1.3.1 Primary Research Questions**

After considering the 'Setting of the Scene' (1.2.1), and the 'Aims and Significance of the Study' (1.3), statements of the Primary Research Questions are pivotal. Each of the research questions is exposed in turn, with a brief commentary to follow. Once the research is complete, these research questions will be answered and acknowledged in the final Chapter 6.

There are five main research questions, some of which have overlapping content. However, different epistemological frameworks and positioning will be utilised to unpick the thematic data.

These primary research questions find their foundations in the contextualisation of the research and the reflexive narratives, and their interpretations.

What follows are the 5 primary research questions and the reasoning behind their choice in this study.

#### **1.3.1.1 Primary Research Question 1**

*What is the relationship between masculine embodiment and the homosocial sporting environment?*

Here the research hopes to gain insight into the understandings and lived experiences of men in homosocial sporting environments and their connection to their bodies. This question lays the foundations for the researcher to uncover the realities of men co-existing in homosocial environments, whereby their bodies are central to what they do. The role of male bonding should also be at the focus of developing this question during the thematic development phase.

Finally, this research question utilises the IPA methodology and the embedded philosophy of interpretation to gain a more sophisticated understanding of the recruited men's experiences while, simultaneously, the concept of homosociality is integral to a Queer Theoretical approach.

#### **1.3.1.2 Primary Research Question 2**

*In the homosocial sporting environment, what role does heteronormativity play in policing masculine embodiment?*

This question raises the debate regarding men existing in homosocial sporting environments, and the role of performing predefined hetero-normative cultures. The non-sexual homosocial environment (as it is currently understood in the literature) enables heteronormative behaviours to control/become the norm in this setting, reinforcing power imbalances between men, from patriarchy to subordination and regardless of sexual orientation. This also includes understanding how men police and monitor other men's heteronormative conformity, within the homosocial setting. In this instance, this body of work would like to see if the male sex role has changed over time or, by utilising Queer Theory as a medium through which to deconstruct this relationship, how have homosociality and heteronormative practices impacted on masculinity and



sexuality. Consideration here turns to the impact of the body and masculinity, in other words do heteronormative behaviours of masculinity shape the way men desire to have their body, do they embody masculinity?

#### **1.3.1.3 Primary Research Question 3**

*Is it possible to divide the foot/shoe wearing dyad; is the 'appearance' and the 'essence' of the foot and shoe separable?*

This aim considers the relationship of wearing shoes, and the foot that goes into the shoe. It is evident that the foot and shoe can sit alone as objects; do men really experience a sporting-shoe in solitude away from the embodied experience of having feet and the rest of the body e.g. legs. The other issue to consider, is does this dyad always stay as a dyad, or are there other factors that interrupt this feet-shoes relationship?

This aim will also consider the role of men talking about their lived experiences and their understanding of male sports-footwear and their inter-relations to the homosocial environment. Through the use of IPA the researcher will be able to gain insight into their conscious experiences (Husserl, 1972 as cited by Smith, Larkin and Flowers, 2009) of that footwear, and try and understand their 'experience of their attention for that object' e.g. the sporting-shoe.

#### **1.3.1.4 Primary Research Question 4**

*What is the relationship between masculine embodiment and sports shoes?*

Using the philosophy of hermeneutics taken from IPA, this PRQ aims to consider the communicative power of footwear/feet and its relationship with masculinity. The communicative power has been termed Podolinguistics or Podopsychosomatics (Rossi, 1977), however, very little actual empirical research has been undertaken to support the signifying language of footwear, let alone within a sporting setting.

Therefore, by wearing sporting footwear within the homosocial setting how do men react or interpret the wearing experiences of other men in this type of footwear. Individual experience (inter-subjectivity) and the ability to gain an understating into the interpretive language of signifiers are paramount here.

It is foreseen that a connection to the previous PRQ (1.3.1.1, PRQ 3), might impact on this question, whereby through gaining insight into the feet/shoes dyad and the understanding if wearing practices, we will understand what impact this will have on the signifying Podolinguistic language of men in sporting shoes. This ultimately focuses on the embodied relationship between feet and shoes and the signifying language that men interpret this affiliation to be.

It is of significance to this study that knowledge and insight are gained in relation to Masculinity Theory, the role of agency, and inter-subjective relationship of masculinity to embodiment.

#### **1.3.1.5 Primary Research Question 5**

*How can Queered masculinity help us to understand the role of masculine capital in homosocial sporting environments?*

In pulling this question apart it is apparent that there is a triangulated theoretical dimension to it, this includes the role of Queer Theory, homosociality and Masculine Capital. Firstly, by Queering masculine bonds, it is hoped that this research will gain further insight into the power relations which occur within homosocial sporting settings. By interpreting the participants' Queered reconstructions of masculinity, it is hoped that the role of heteronormativity and sexuality will come to the fore to allow further debate, giving silenced/subordinate masculinities a voice. In addition by utilising Queer Theory within this body of work, it is hoped that at the end of the research process and by taking a reflective approach, epistemological development for Queer Theory in sport will be noted.

The second part of this question, is its relationship to homosociality, this study hopes to gain insight by putting homosocial environments at the centre of the fray, and its relationship with masculinities in sport.

Masculine Capital (David and Brannon, 1976; De Visser *et al.* 2009) will be used as a platform to measure men's adherence to already predefined tenets of masculinity. It is hoped that new tenets of Masculine Capital might evolve as a result of this body of research. While these concepts are utilised to dismantle socio-cultural structures of masculinity in sport, it is hoped that a clearer insight will be gained by unlocking taken-for-granted knowledge locked up in the homosexual/heterosexual binary of sports men.

There will be several outcomes provided by the research questions and these relate specifically to the following:

1. It can be seen that these research questions are focused on dismantling the relationships of men in the homosocial sport settings, while at the same time directing the focus of the research onto the role of embodiment and masculinity within those homosocial sporting environments.
2. The role of embodiment and performativity, particularly in relation to the feet/shoes dyad, has never been research before; in this manner it truly highlights an initiative gap in current theoretical knowledge.
3. It is also significant to note the use of Queer Theory within the sporting setting. As will be illustrated in (3.8), literature in this area is limited and as such it is hoped that by undertaking this research, new knowledge will be developed to support the Queer Theoretical agenda. With these thoughts in mind this thesis attempts to embed the theoretical constructs of Queer theory in the following manner.

## **1.4 Embedding Theory**

Exploration of the theoretical framework unpinning the ontological stance of this body of work will now be discussed. There are two main theoretical perspectives that are utilized within this body of work, Masculinity Theory and Queer Theory.

Masculinity Theory, supported by work of Anderson (2007; 2008b; 2009b), Connell (1995; 1996; 2002) and Messner (1990; 1992; 1995), provides insights into the socially constructed positioning of men, through understanding masculinity within sporting environments. Hierarchical structures are a key focus within Masculinity Theory, with dominant forms of masculinity at the top (hegemonic) with subordinate masculinities/femininities at the bottom. Once polar opposite masculinities exist (binaries), these lead to the creation of power inequalities and social masculine dominance (Connell, 1995; Sedgwick, 1985),

Masculinity Theory has developed in recent years to consider the notion of Inclusive Masculinity Theory (Anderson, 2009b). Anderson (2009b) believes that as homophobia decreases in the sporting setting, hegemonic masculinity has also decreased.

Queer Theory, in contrast, considers the deconstruction of sexuality (Chaudwell, 2006). Queer Theory is said to be 'temporal, future-orientated, and always in progress, and avoids fixed positions' (Nylund, 2007, p. 18), and through these processes a voice given to previously denied or silenced identities (Sykes, 2006). Queer Theory dismantles the socially constructed existence of binary order in society. In relation to this body of work, it is hoped that Queer Theory will play a vital role in the interrogation and dismantling of the homosexual/heterosexual binary in homosocial sporting environments. It has been said that this is an anti-identitarianistic approach, which challenges heteronormativity and its practices within structuring and binarising sociocultural environments (Chaudwell, 2006).

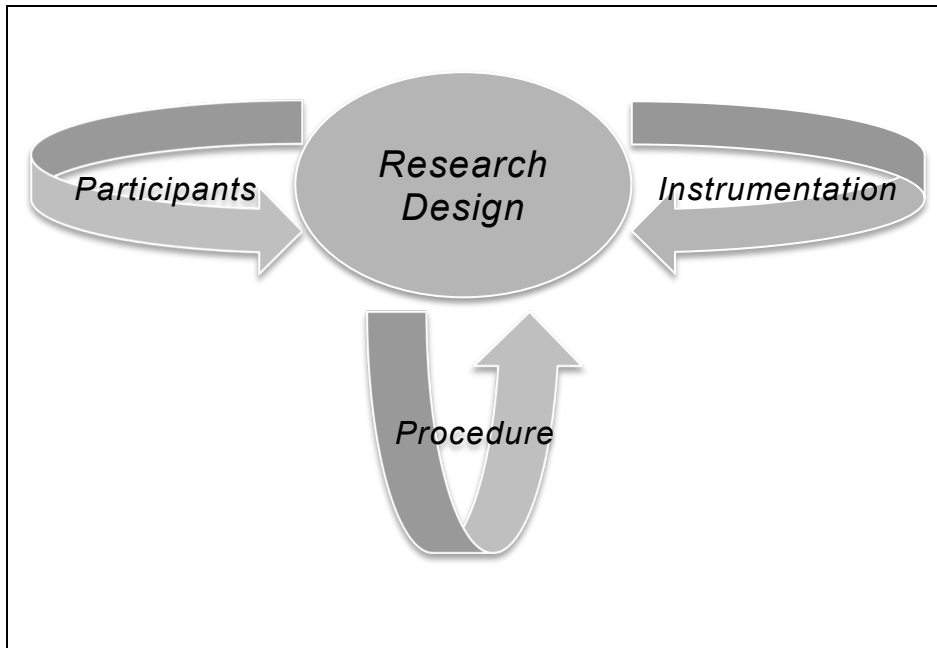
Masculinity Theory will be utilised to highlight power imbalances and binaries within the data gathered, while Queer theory will be implemented to dismantle these binaries. Gaps in these binaries will then be highlighted to the researcher, and insight will be gained into participants' experiences, and how those experiences are lived, shared and understood. Homosociality (Bird, 1996; Sedgwick, 1985i) is a key component of Queer Theory, which provides pivotal epistemological alignment.

Masculinity Theory and Queer Theory will give the interpreter a hermeneutic lens through which IPA can be integrated as the analytical tool.

Finally, through embedding new theoretical combinations, such as Masculinity Theory and Queer Theory, it is foreseen that a new understanding in the way masculinity is embodied in homosocial environments will be produced for the first time. Indeed, limited research has been produced utilising a Queer Theoretical perspective, providing a gap in empirical research epistemology. It is hoped that this study might begin to fill this gap in knowledge. What follows is a brief synopsis of the research design for this study.

## 1.5 Research Design

When reflecting upon the research design of this thesis it is evidenced that there are three main areas to be taken into consideration. These include: (1) the recruitment and role of the participants in the study, (2) the instrumentation used to collect the data and (3) the procedure that will be followed; each of these areas will now be discussed in turn.



**Figure 1: A Schematic Diagram of The Research Design of the Study**

Systematic approaches are recommended when utilising an Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis methodology (Brocki and Wearden, 2006; Smith, 2004; Smith and Osborn, 2008; Smith *et al.* 2009) and, therefore, strategic planning was needed when taking into account quality qualitative research methodology and the recruitment and role of participants. This included the fact that IPA argues that due to the close exploration of 'experience, understandings, perceptions and views' (Brocki and Wearden, 2006), of the topic under investigation, a small homogenous group of participants is recommended (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009).

There is some contention over the actual number of participants needed in an IPA study; however, numbers vary from one participant (Smith, flowers and Larkin, 2009) to forty-eight (Brocki and Wearden, 2006); (for a more in depth discussion, please see Section 4.4 of this thesis). Reflecting on the literature, and through the knowledge gained from the pilot study it was concluded that between eight and ten participants were needed for this IPA study to be viable.

The inclusion criteria for participants included the need to be regularly involved in sport (whether that be within a team or individually), and they had to be male. The participants also needed to disclose their sexuality, and have an opinion on masculinity, their body and footwear. To recruit these participants, ethical approval was gained from the University of East London's Ethics Committee. The committee agreed to a poster campaign around the university, and direct emailing to homosexual sports teams within the London area. The ethics committee also agreed the draft example of questions that would be utilised within the semi-structured interview process.

The second area to be considered in the research design of this project was the instrumentation used to collect the qualitative data. A semi-structured interview schedule was implemented to gather qualitative data from the participants. The interview was recorded using audio equipment. The semi-structured interview is considered the most appropriate instrument for collecting data within an IPA study (Smith and Osborn, 2008). The semi-structured interview is particularly significant to an IPA study such as this as the structure allows participants the opportunity and flexibility to express their own worldly experiences, and they are not constrained by the format of a structured interview schedule (Smith and Eatough, 2007; Smith and Osborn, 2008).

With this schedule in mind, reflexive thought should be given to the Pilot Study (4.8), which in reality became the foundations for structuring the questions utilised in the final research project. In developing the questions for the research project, again consideration was given to the IPA methodology. In this regard IPA

suggests that you should consider your questions in little groups of themes, so that you can move the participant into areas that might enlighten the whole thesis (Smith and Osborn, 2004).

The Pilot Study (4.8) enabled the researcher to gain insight into the use of semi-structured interview questioning within the IPA context. With insight from the literature, and knowledge gained from the Pilot Study, it was easy within this context to allow the participant to become an 'expert' in their own interview process (Smith and Eatough, 2007) and therefore a more rigid set of flexible questions were developed for the final research methods. This allowed the researcher to work in conjunction with IPA, and not fight against it.

For the final interviews for the main body of work, approximately fifteen questions were formulated, where the aim was to interview participants in one hour (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). Please note a copy of the final Interview Schedule agreed by the University Ethics Committee can be reviewed in APPENDIX F.

Finally the procedure of this methodological approach will now be briefly exposed.

Participants were recruited into the qualitative IPA study, and asked to consider the role of masculinity, the body, same sex sporting environments and sporting-footwear. Posters were placed around the University of East London and homosexual sporting groups targeted via email with an inclusion of the poster, requesting an invitation to participate. Participants were expected to disclose their sexuality prior to the start of the study, whereby written consent to participate was mutually agreed upon.

As mentioned previously the semi-structured interview process took approximately one hour, whereby a set of preformed questions (grouped into themes) was utilised.

Once the data was collected the electronic audio file was given a key and pseudo name to protect the participants identity, in line with the Data Protection Act



(1998). These interviews were transcribed verbatim, and organised on paper as guided by Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009), thereby making them ready for the process of analysis.

Analysis/interpretation of the data involved using Interpretive Phenomenal Analysis (IPA) as an analytical tool. In brief, each interview was analysed in turn, adhering to the protocol suggest by Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009). And each interview was also analysed for emergent themes. Once each interview had been analysed, cross-referencing between transcripts proceeded, whereby development of the final super-ordinate, and subordinate themes were created.

In summary, it can be observed that the research design process has closely adhered to the literature supporting an IPA methodology also that the recruitment of a homogenous group of men was highlighted, and justification for the group recruited was given. Discussion of the 'instrumentation' used to gather the data was also exposed; similarly this was also structured in line with literature from an IPA epistemological background. Finally the design of the overall project was succinctly summarized, with brief insight reflecting upon the transcription of data from the digital recordings and the summaries analysis process.

## **1.6 The Importance of the Research**

The importance of this research is located in the fact that it is at the cutting edge sociological research, with its scope and theoretical integration. This means, in an attempt to understand the role of masculinity in homosocial sporting environments, an insightful methodological approach was needed. It is truly felt that Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis is an innovate tool through which to dismantle this relationship. Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis and the attempt to bind it to Masculinity Theory are ground breaking in a sociological study. In addition, making links between Queer Theory, homosociality and Masculinity Theory are also innovative and are at the cutting edge of gender study research.

The importance of this research also lays in the exposure of Queer and marginalised masculinities within sports sociology. This area of research is a slowly growing fragmented area within sports sociology, however, as the opening of this Chapter suggests, this is a very current problem. Therefore, with marginalised masculinities being given a voice, and their embodied experiences heard for the first time this research also become ethically important.

Through understanding embodied masculinity and unpicking the relationship that men have with their sports footwear, has never been research and published before. It is hoped that this will become a very topical area for discussion after the publication of the thesis.

Drawing this section to a close, it is felt that the importance of research ultimately lays in its diverse and inclusive approach to methodology and subject matter. It is indicated that his approach is fruitful in providing philosophical debate as well as providing excellent contributions to knowledge.

## **1.7 Conclusion**

In conclusion, it is suggested that Chapter 1 has given the clarity and insight to key structures and foundations of this thesis titled 'Big and Pumped: Embodied Masculinity in Homosocial Sporting Environments'.

Through 'Contextualising the Problem' (1.1) (masculinity in sport that is) by utilising the analogy and relationship between Thomas, Owens and Cohen, this body of work demonstrates the grass-roots level of a problematic relationship of masculinity in sport. This contextualisation also involves locating the researcher within the study and the homosocial/masculine sporting experiences revealed (1.1.1). By 'Setting the Scene' (1.2.1) this Chapter then also provided an overview synopsis statement.

The overall 'Aims and Significance of the Study' (1.3) allowed this Chapter to introduced the Primary Research Questions (1.3.1). The 'Primary Research Questions' (1.3.1.1) to (1.3.1.5) set the agenda for what will actually be the focus of this research process. However, it should be stated again that the participants are the focus of the research and at times they set the interview agenda as their worldly experiences evolve (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). This can mean that ultimately the research can unpick new and unconsidered avenues. This can also lead to the gaps in knowledge being highlighted as well as new theoretical thinking.

With the Primary Research Questions in mind, the key theoretical perspectives were introduced (1.4), which included a brief introduction to Masculinity Theory and Queer Theory.

The overall 'Research Design' (1.5) exposes in succinct detail the overall research process leading up to the analysis of data. It is also here where more detail is given to the role of Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis.

Finally, this Chapter highlights the foundations for the whole thesis, and each Chapter to follow will expose in different ways every aspect reflected upon above in more elaborate and critical detail. Therefore to gain greater knowledge into the literature that supports this body of work, insight is needed into the theoretical notions of masculinities and sport (Chapter 2) and Queer Theory and homosociality (Chapter 3).

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

This Chapter will explore significant literature, which will support the exploration of the Primary Research Questions (PRQ's).

Literature is drawn from a variety of different sources, enabling insight into the complex relationship proposed by this thesis. This literature review thus draws on literature from a diverse background such as Sports Sociology, Fashion, Masculinity and Queer Theory,

Firstly, this literature review will explore the role of masculinity in sport (2.2). Clearly, masculinity is a central theme to this body of work, and will help in answering the PRQ 1-5. Consideration will be given to developmental role of masculinity in the schooling environment. Commentary will turn to the impact of institutionalised sporting regimes on the modelling children in school and their understanding of performing masculinity (2.2.1). It is felt that masculinity in school, impacts on future modelling from boyhood to manhood. The literature review will then define Orthodox and Hegemonic Masculinity and their relationship to 'masculine capital (2.2.2). These definitions are essential for understanding Masculinity Theory terminology utilised throughout the remainder of this thesis.

Homo/sexuality in sport will then be discussed (2.2.3), taking into account that homosexual sportsmen will be asked to participate in the study. Homophobia becomes a central role in this Chapter, which will make links to Chapter 3 (Queer Theory), and homosociality. Homophobia runs through all the research questions, however, it raises questions related to a more feminised masculinity e.g. metrosexuality. Metrosexuality (2.2.4), and the effect of heterosexual sportsmen utilising their body as a form of commodity for the homoerotic gaze

will be introduced, links will also be made to spornography and gay culture. Broader examples will be discussed which relate to the opening example found in Chapter 1 (1.1), this has an impact on all the primary research questions.

Finally, this literature review will expose the overarching concept of Podoculture (2.3); the notion of podolinguistics and podosexuality (2.3.1), bringing Primary Research Questions 3 and 4 into the fore. This takes into account the language of footwear and feet in the social context. Moving on, more insight will be gained about podoculture and Sneakerisation (2.3.2) This whole section considers the podosexual male and the relationship that heterosexual men have with shoes; the type of shoe and colours associated with masculinity will be discussed. Alignment will also be made to sources of literature that consider the link between homosexuality, shoes, fetishism and sport. To finalise this first section, consideration will turn to the symbolic nature of feet and shoes, as a mechanism for understanding the subconscious imagery of shoe wearing practices.

A final conclusion will be made to summarise the literature discussed and the links that mesh this overall thesis conceptually and the Primary Research Questions (2.5).

## **2.2 Masculinity Theory in Sport**

To begin this journey into masculinity in sport, consideration will firstly turn to the role of Childhood and Masculinity (2.2.1), as it is felt that this is an important aspect of men's lives which shape their understanding of masculinity. It is here that understandings related to heteronormative environments are shaped, also shaping and impacting on the understanding of the Primary Research Questions. To reiterate the research questions focus on environments, which shape heteronormative behaviours, and the policing of those environments.

A more structured approach will be taken in defining '**Orthodox Masculinity, Hegemonic Masculinity and Masculine Capital**' (2.2.2), again these concepts

are deeply integrated into shaping the framework which supports the primary research questions, especially Primary Research Question The role of Sexuality and homophobia in sport will then be considered (2.2.4), which neatly leads onto the impact of metrosexuality, and its relation to hegemony and masculinity.

### **2.2.1 Childhood and Masculinity**

‘In the History of the British Empire it is written that England has owed her sovereignty to her sports’ (Welldon, 1881 as cited by Messner, 1992). Swain (2006) states that when we consider the role of school today we need to take note of the fact that schooling and our children are shaped by socio-cultural, politico-economic, and historical conditions. Bruns and Muffulli (2000) state that in the United Kingdom, 79% of children aged 5 to 15 take part in sports organised through schooling activities. These sporting activities are often taught through sex-segregated lessons and team sports (Anderson, 2005a; Coad, 2008; Connell, 1995; 2002; Messner, 1992). Think back to your childhood and the playground you used to play in? The playground where we used to play and children play today isn’t very different. There have always been gendered areas where boys and girls are drawn to play (Thorne, 1995). It has been thought that children commonly play and live in separate worlds within school time; this has been named the ‘two worlds model’ (Thorne, 1995). Nevertheless, Swain (2006, p.332) notes that ‘individual, personal rules, routines and expectations, and the use of resources and space will all have a profound impact on the way young boys (and girls) experience their lives at school’. Thorne (1995) continues by stating that boys gather in areas where there are large playing fields and basketball courts; whereas girls often play at a more intimate level, spending time talking becoming more socially aware; however, as we all know this is not a fixed phenomenon and there are always exceptions to the rule (Swain, 2006). Anderson (2005b; 2006a) also felt that the most dominant male in school, sits on the top of the hill pushing the physically weaker children to the bottom in a metaphorical sense. Swain (2006) extends this idea further, arguing that many schools can be said to have their own gender regimes, the implication of this

being that boys have different opportunities in which to experiment with the role of doing a masculine 'boy'. Swain (2006) also adds that the situation becomes more complex in school when research is undertaken; as ethnographic researchers often give typologies to different cultural groups of children in school e.g. the jocks, the footballers, the geeks, the strange kids. These typologies can often be static; meaning that the title of your group can bind the child into a nonflexible cultural grouping. This suggests that once you are stuck in a typology, a child cannot shift from group to another group e.g. a sporty child typology couldn't shift into the geek child typology. Most significantly, Connell (1996) and Gilbert and Gilbert (1998) consider four key areas where masculine defining practices occur within schools; these include; 'management and policy/organisational practices (including discipline), teacher and pupil relations, the curriculum', and finally and most significantly with regard to this thesis, 'sport/games'. Most institutions engage in sporting activities, and have school teams and matches; it has been said that many institutions consider the role of sport, as a religion that regenerates individualist, competitive, and coercive values and behaviours (Burstyn, 1999).

This is supported by research carried out by Swain (2006); whereby he used an ethnographic methodology and investigated masculine typologies of children in three schools; the results suggested that throughout these three schools the most advantageous typologies of masculinity, revolved around being top sports men, being physically athletic and strong. It has been noted that when school civilisation revolves around athletics rather than academic culture; Anderson (2005a) quoted Jackson Katz (a leading anti-sexist male activist and speaker in the United States) stating that this schooling cultural definition is known as 'jock-ocracy'. The jock culture that currently exists in schooling institutional establishments is said to be physically and mentally unhealthy; these behaviours include 'machismo, desperate competition, bullying, violence and being tough stoical and aggressive' (Coad, 2008, p6).

There are many reasons why boys become involved in sports, including family pressure (Messner, 1995), friendship (Messner, 1992), scholarships to a better education (Anderson, 2005a), proving something (masculinity) (Anderson, 2005b) or hiding something (sexuality) (Anderson, 2005a); the list is possibly endless, however, vast amounts of literature points to the fact that masculinity for both personal and sociological reasons seems to be a major driver.

For example Messner's (1992) central concern about children and the drive for instilling masculinity in sports took a historico-sociological form. Over the past two decades it was felt that there was a direct impact of fathers working longer hours and taking the role of 'bread winner'; this impact meant women overtly took a more central role in their son's lives. Women were teaching boys at school and were running the household while these children were growing up; it became the perception that women were ruling society. Masculine dominance feared that a 'feminisation in the new industrial society' (Messner, 1992, p.14) would turn 'our boys soft'; in response to this, a surge in male dominant sports groups and sporting societies formalised. This revolution against cultural feminisation created a homosocial male dominant society, in the form of men-only sports teams (Messer, 1992; 1995; Thorne 1992). Anderson (2005a, p. 71) notes that 'sex segregation allows men to exist in a homogenous, highly masculinised, homophobic and sexist arena without the voices of women to contrast their conservative understandings'.

To conclude, it can be seen that schooling has a major impact on how children are involved in sport; that through binary segregation and institutionalised attitudes towards masculine-defining practices (e.g. management and policy/organisational practices (including discipline), teacher and pupil relations, the curriculum, and sport/games); this is termed jock-ocracy. Children are interwoven into a socio-cultural understanding of sport and masculine defining practices. Through these practices, sport engrains children to understand what it means to play 'boy', and that being a man involves being strong, athletic and



physically good at sports. It is evident in reflection of our socio-historical background of a post-war feminising society; that men had to rise up and define themselves, and through sports it was a way of creating homogenous social activities that reinforced the social patriarchal masculine binary sporting code.

### **2.2.2 Orthodox Masculinity, Hegemonic Masculinity and Masculine Capital**

Masculinity and definitions of masculinity have been written about extensively; these have been underpinned sociologically, anthropologically and historically (Chancer and Watkins, 2006).

This thesis will be considering masculinity from the perspective of sports sociology; this dictates that definitions and examples used to support this literature review will stem from this field of study. This procedural approach in selecting literature in this way, is to locate and pin point pivotal areas of research that are relevant in the fields associated with sport.

The author will now present, define and discuss, three essential theories that are used when debating masculinity. Firstly, orthodox masculinity will be offered, while the different views and opinions regarding this theory are exposed; once the foundations of orthodox masculinity are formed, the author will consider the notion of hegemonic masculinity and define and expand on this theory also. The concept of Masculine Capital will also be discussed; however, it may be difficult to present this sequentially as all these theories overlap. This is very similar in the way that the primary research questions also overlap, however, Masculine Capital plays a particular role in understanding the role of Queered masculinity in homosocial sporting environments (PRQ5).

Anderson (2008b), in his research, explains that there are some tenets used to define Orthodox Masculinity. He explains that Orthodox Masculinity is dependent on a variety of variables; these include 'risk taking, homophobia, self-sacrifice,

the marginalising of others, a willingness to inflict bodily damage, and the acceptance of pain and injury' (Anderson, 2008a, p. 261). He supplements his definition of Orthodox Masculinity by arguing that the above tenets must align with social dominance; most interestingly, Anderson (2008b) felt this is something that all men can attempt to achieve in their lives, suggesting that this is a phenomenon in flux.

Anderson (2005b) undertook a pivotal piece of research which investigated the construction of masculinity among college-age heterosexual cheerleaders; his research suggested that there are two forms of normative masculinity; orthodox and inclusive. In this instance, orthodox masculinity follows the above standard, as already stated; while the other demonstrates a new wave of masculinity that shows men behaving more inclusively in a feminised environment. Inclusive masculinity indicates that heterosexual men accept feminised behaviour and homosexual men. By accepting this behaviour as normal these men are ultimately described as being inclusively masculine (Anderson, 2009a; 2009b). Anderson (2005a) has developed and enhanced this version of Orthodox Masculinity from a version of hegemonic masculinity defined by David and Brannon (1976,p.12); this version states that there are four main tenets of hegemonic masculinity which are '(1) no sissy stuff, (2) be a big wheel, (3) be a sturdy oak and, (4) give em hell' (these tenets are also the main components of Masculine Capital, however, these will be discussed in more detail shortly).

We might ask ourselves at this point, what does 'hegemonic' mean in this context in association with masculinity? Connell (1995, p. 77) defines hegemonic masculinity as a 'configuration of gender practice which embodies the currently accepted answer to the problem of the legitimacy of patriarchy, which guarantees (or is taken to guarantee) the dominant position of men and subordinate women'. Barry and Yuill (2008) simplify the theory of hegemonic masculinity by stating that to be hegemonically masculine in western society, one needs to be healthy,

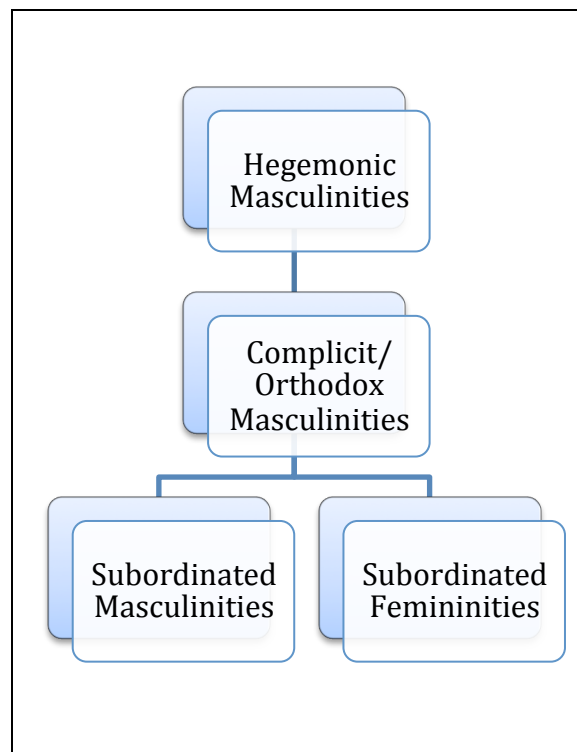
heterosexual, wealthy, assertive, aggressive and white, while being associated with dominant power.

In addition to this, Anderson (2005a) believes that for hegemonic masculinity to exist today these men must not only have achieved all the tenets described but must also, 'possess the ascribed variables of the dominant form of masculinity'. It has been argued that the theoretical foundations on which hegemonic masculinity has been formulated, ultimately allows this construct of masculinity to be the dominant one.

This is simply due to the acceptance, that the theoretical foundations of hegemony shifts in response to cultural influences, allowing hegemonic masculinity to in general always remain socially dominant (Anderson, 2008a cites Connell, 1987; 1995). De Visser *et al.* (2009) felt that masculinity should be considered as a plural rather than a singular; that for masculinity to exist there needs to be an extended focus from the male/female binary code, to include other masculinities. Therefore, if hegemonic masculinity is to idealistically sit at the top of this hierarchy, these 'other masculinities' need to include a subordinate masculinity genre.

Connell (1995) highlights that within a patriarchal hegemonic system of gender relations; dominance and subordination occur between groups of men. In this case, note Figure 2 whereby hegemonic masculinity and the associated subordinate masculinities are noted, i.e. Complicit/Orthodox Masculinity (Orthodox) and subordinate masculinity/femininities. It should be highlighted here that Connell (1995) refers to the Orthodox Masculinity as Complicit Masculinity; these terms will be used interchangeably.

Furthermore, Bridges (2009) felt it was of note that Hegemonic Masculinity takes different forms in alternate fields of interaction, he believed that the term for this environmental flexibility is called 'cultural capital'.



**Figure 2: Barry and Yuill (2008) Diagrammatic Representation of Masculinity and Hierarchy**

Barry and Yuill (2008) suggest that Complicit Masculinity is not living up to the full expectations of Hegemonic Masculinity; however, there is a fair amount of power held in regard to this form of masculinity. They also argue that masculinities that fall in this subordinate category; are those men whose masculinity is physically or mentally challenged; gay and disabled men fall into this category of masculinity (Barry and Yuill, 2008).

Anderson (2005a) suggests that if you follow the above tenets of Hegemonic Masculinity and Orthodox Masculinity you are said to be raising your 'Masculine Capital'. Anderson (2005a) builds upon empirical research undertaken by David and Brannon (1976) in which Masculine Capital is used as a gage through which to define masculinity. De Visser *et al.* (2009) in their research of 'Masculine

Capital and Health Related Behaviour' considered four additional domains which represent the relationship between bodily-health Capital/Hegemonic Masculinity these include: (1) physical prowess, (2) lack of vanity, (3) sexuality and, (4) alcohol use.

The rise and fall of Masculine Capital within the sporting environment is dynamic and complex. Barry and Yuill (2008) also provide some additional examples of Masculine Capital, these include: good health, heterosexuality, wealth, assertiveness, aggressiveness and being white, these are qualities associated with dominance and power i.e. Hegemonically Masculinity.

In order to achieve Hegemonic Masculinity, one needs to embody the tenets of Orthodox masculinity as in David and Brannon's (1976) tenets of Masculine Capital. An Orthodox Masculine male will continue to be considered subordinate/Orthodox if they are unable to maintain David and Brannon's (1976) tenets of Masculine Capital (Anderson, 2005a). The difference between Orthodox Masculinity and Hegemonic Masculinity is that Hegemonic Masculine men fulfil all of David and Brannon's (1976) tenets of Masculine Capital, the difference is, they are able to maintain them, and ascribe to dominant heteronormative forms of masculinity (Anderson, 2005a).

It is argued that the tenets of Masculine Capital utilised in orthodoxy and hegemony, are like pillars of strength in maintaining desired masculinity. Therefore, if any of the tenets are altered, reduced or affected in anyway, it is argued that one's Masculine Capital is reduced or diminished (Bridges, 2009; De Visser *et al.* 2009; Anderson, 2005a). It argued that examples of diminishing Masculine Capital include, homosexuality, injury, weakness, fear and feminised behaviours (Bridges, 2009; De Visser *et al.* 2009; Anderson, 2005a); any of these qualities reduce Masculine Capital, and therefore it is said that these men cannot attain hegemony or orthodoxy, and are therefore considered subordinate.

One could state that masculine capital is directly proportional to the components that conform to hegemonic masculinity: the greater the amount of hegemonic masculine traits a man holds the greater his Masculine Capital. It is possible that this rule is not fixed in stone; De Visser and Smith (2006) cite Edley and Wetherall (1997) and take into account men who fail to abide by the rules of Hegemonic Masculinity, and for example, allow femininity to be displayed. These men must alter their behaviour and practices to gain Masculine Capital elsewhere, in order to still be considered equally masculine to other men. They consider this to be a trade off, one can't fulfil all the qualities of Hegemonic Masculine Capital all of the time. Through compensation, a pattern occurs e.g. you might have large muscles and look physically strong, but on the other hand you could use moisturise in the locker room, thus altering the weighting of ones Masculine Capital.

It is also important to note, since masculinity and the discourses of masculinity are flexible and change depending on the environments in which a man exist; certain institutions (prisons/sports teams) demonstrate that Masculine Capital and hegemonic behaviour can be threatened less when the masculine ground rules of homogenous behaviour are the same for all men e.g. homosexual sex in prison (Anderson, 2007 cite Reis (1961) and Klein (1993)).

In conclusion, the definitions of masculinity are complex and convoluted. Here, two types of masculinity have been defined, orthodox and hegemonic. Orthodox Masculinity is dependent on key variables; these include risk taking, homophobia, self-sacrifice, the marginalising of others, a willingness to inflict bodily damage, and the acceptance of pain and injury. There is an additional category of orthodox masculinity that that is entitled inclusive masculinity; whereby masculinity of this kind accepts femininity and homosexuality.

Hegemonic definitions of masculinity consider the fact that one needs to be healthy, heterosexual, wealthy, assertive, aggressive and white, while being

associated with dominant power; and, simultaneously, taking on the role of (1) no sissy stuff, (2) be a big wheel, (3) be a sturdy oak and, (4) give em hell. Hegemonic masculinity is at the top of a patriarchal system whereby, Complicit/Orthodox masculinities (not living up to the full expectations of hegemony) fall below hegemonic masculinity, and subordinate masculinities (homosexuality) fall below Complicit/Orthodox Masculinities.

Finally, while fulfilling the role of hegemonic masculinity; it is said that if you are able to carry all the essential criteria of manliness, you are said to raise your masculine capital. Masculinity and the social construction of masculinity can be said to change depending on the environment in which it currently exists. This has major implications since sport exists in an institutional masculine environment; worthy of deeper investigation enabled by this thesis.

Through exposing the relationships between Masculine Capital, Hegemonic Masculinity and Orthodox Masculinity, it is hoped that when the data is deconstructed awareness will be given to the relationships that exist between embodiment, homosociality and the sporting environment.

### **2.2.3 Sexuality and Homophobia in Sport**

The role of sexuality and its impact on masculinity are integral to the foundations of this thesis. Two factors will be briefly discussed in detail, taking particular attention to the sporting context.

Sexuality/masculinity in sport has been discussed in detail over the years (Anderson, 2002; 2005a; 2005b; 2007; 2008a; 2008b; 2009a; Bridges, 2009; Burstyn, 1999; Connell, 1995; De Visser and Smith, 2006; De Visser *et al.* 2009; Messner, 1992). It has been noted that gay men have made very little progress in being out and open in professional sports (Anderson, 2006). Anderson (2005a) continues by stating that since there is a limited number of 'out' sports men, which has led researchers to believe that sport is 'monolithically homophobic'.

Anderson (2002) (cites Griffin (1998), Hekma (1998), Pronger (1990) Wolf *et al.* (2001)) who argue that sport not only rejects homosexuality it reinforces and supports hyperheterosexuality. Since sporting 'spaces' are currently heteronormative and organised in a homogenous participant manner, there has been a drive since the 1970's to produce homosexual sporting teams (Messner, 1992); Jarvis (2008, p.64) states that 'Organised lesbian and gay sport occurs within a complex and increasingly sophisticated network of individuals, teams, clubs, and leagues operating on a local, regional, national and/or international level'; Messner (1992) also adds that homosexual organised sports are essential in developing gay and lesbian communities.

Pronger (1990) suggests in his work, that most athletes are presumed to be heterosexual, virile, tough and competitive, falling in line with the stereotype associated with a hegemonic masculine man in sport. As stated previously, being gay or the implication that one is gay in sport, impacts on ones masculine capital and the ideology of hegemonic masculinity (Bridges, 2009; De Vassir *et al.* 2009; Anderson, 2005a); it is suggested that as a gay man, one is more feminised and unable to participate within masculine defined sports (Sabo and Runfola, 1980). This also implicates that all gay men are effeminate (Jarvis, 2006) which falls in line with binary understandings of masculinity, whereby femininity is subordinate in this patriarchal hierarchy; i.e. as already stated homosexuality is considered to be a subordinate masculinity (Figure 2). The question we have to ask ourselves is, why are homosexual men (or should I say out homosexual men) outcast for participating in heteronormal team sports? Anderson (2005a) feels that if gay men are to succeed and excel in the highest level of sport, it would cast doubt and threaten to expose the 'fallacy upon which heterosexuality is built'. He continues by stating that if effeminate men are shown to be as good or perform better than heterosexual sports men, it brings into question the binary definitions between straight and gay men, but most disturbingly is directly brings into question the distinction between men and women as a whole. Anderson (2005a) finalises, by suggesting, if an excellent gay



sports man highlights the distinction between man/gay man and woman; he is directly using sport to challenge itself as a masculinising agent; therefore challenging the whole institution in which Hegemonic Masculinity in sport exists. He sums up by suggesting that these gay men are deviant and automatically outcast from professional sporting environments.

Wellard (2006) undertook ethnographic research investigating 'Gay men playing tennis'; here it was found that these tennis players were so inbound in the aligning themselves with the practices of heteronormativity and defending the role of hegemonic masculinity, that they were excluding the masculinities that their own sexuality fell in line with (subordinate). For instance, the tennis club formerly held a mock federation cup on a Sunday morning, here members were to represent a female tennis player from around the world; one participant even took to wearing a tennis skirt. It was felt that there was an element of campness, about this mock federation and the player wearing a skirt insulted the fact that it demonstrated that the club wasn't straight; in response to this, the club stopped the mock federation and refused to let the player wear the skirt. This highlights the fact that homophobiaphobia (Plummer, 2006) exists not only in the heterosexual community but amongst the homosexual community also; it could be felt that it is a way of deflecting their homosexual sporting existence through the morality of a hegemonic masculine alignment.

Hegemonic masculine men reinforce these stereotypes and underpin their own insecurity through homophobic discourse; and the derogatory commenting on less masculine men (weaker men). Hegemonic heterosexual men use homophobic discourse to discredit other heterosexual men of their Masculine Capital (Plummer, 2006). Plummer (2006) through his research on 'Sportophobia', notes the discrediting power of homophobic discourse is both feared and respected; he coins this term 'homophobiaphobia' (Plummer, 2006, p.134). Pronger (1999, p.374) suggests that;

‘...the well-known homophobia of competitive sports serves an important sociocultural function. It prevents the implicit homoeroticism of competitive sport, the pleasures of male bodies playing with each other, from proceeding to explicit sexual expression,.. That is to say, it maintains the panoptic line that must not be crossed if the orthodox masculine – which is to say the patriarchal heterosexual –credentials of competitive sport are to be maintained. In other words, the homophobia of competitive sport allows men to play with each other’s bodies and still preserve their patriarchal heterosexist hegemony; they can have their (beef) cake and eat it, too’.

(Pronger, 1999, p.374)

At this stage, it is important to consider the use of homophobic language and its use within a sporting environment. Derogatory belittling of other sportsmen within a sporting environment often contain connotations of homosexuality, words such as sissy, poofster and faggot are used frequently (Plummer, 2006); Anderson (2005a) states that ‘fag’ seems to be the homophobic term, of most consistent use by both gay and straight athletes; it is also used by coaches as a motivational marker. Anderson (2005a, p.82) states that homophobic discourse of this type is an example of ‘symbolic violence’.

Violence and bodily damage in contact sport is integral to the physicality of this type of sport, injury is unavoidable. Messner (1992) argues that physical violence in the form of sporting violence is the only socially accepted form of violence. Boys grow up exerting their physical masculine dominance over other boys; at matches, families look on in pride as they watch their children cause physical damage to one another. Messner (1992) continues by stating that as men grow up they learn to use their bodies for violence, however, Anderson (2005a) discusses the fact that gay athletes should fear homophobic athletes in contact

sports; they are trained in violence and use homophobic discourse to overtly suggest their potential damage to fellow gay sportsmen. This leads gay athletes to fear their sexuality in sport, and it puts fear into closeted gay men of being suspected of being gay. (Price and Parker, 2003). Anderson (2002) states in previous work, that for gay men to avoid physical and verbal violence in sport they need to confirm to the mantra of athletics- winning. This was supported by an interview with Ben Cohen, an elite rugby player who stated, 'The players and fans would be more interested in his standard of playing I would suggest' (Buzinski, 2008).

To conclude, being 'out' in sport can have an impact on your acceptance within the professional sporting world; it has been said to be monolithically homophobic. Due to the homophobic environment of heterosexual sports; the development and integration of homosexual teams have sprung up. If one is 'out' in sport, it impacts on your Masculine Capital; it is as if you do not qualify to engage in sport within the heterosexual community. Through marginalisation of homosexuals in sport; via symbolic and physical violence, the hierarchical order of masculinity is kept in line. If homosexual sportsmen are able to perform as well as, or better than heterosexual sportsmen; masculinity and the binary orders of man/women will also be under close scrutiny and if there will be a possible destruction of hegemonic masculinity as it is currently known.

#### **2.2.4 Metrosexuality**

This literature review has so far discussed the definition and role of hegemonic masculinity; it has exposed the role of homosexuality and homophobia in sport. However, it is felt that as the physical gap between heterosexuality and homosexuality is closing, consideration will now briefly develop the role of metrosexuality.

It is felt that physical contact between heterosexual men is closing. Eric Anderson an authority on masculinity and sport informed me recently that, he was

completing some research looking at the behaviour of college boys. He gave me an example, where two heterosexual male teenagers were sitting in their sixth form college common room; it was after sports and one boy was massaging another boy's foot. Anderson, commented that this behaviour went undisturbed in their common room, students behaved as if this was a common physical practice. The gap between heterosexuality/homosexuality and masculinity could be said to be becoming narrower; there is a decrease in homophobia (Anderson, 2009b). As a purveyor of social interaction, it could be said that this decrease of homophobia could be related to a wider spread of the feeling of metrosexuality.

There is a general perception in society that metrosexual is a term that could be used in a way that allows heterosexual men to be in touch with their feminine side, or simply allows men to relax into 21<sup>st</sup> masculinity. Consider what you understand by the term metrosexuality? Anderson (2005a) cites Flocker (2004) who in his chapter notes, that Mark Simpson as journalist and writer first coined the term metrosexual in 1990 in an online article on sexuality.

Coad (2008) discusses the theory of metrosexuality, where he argues two main points that differentiate Hegemonic Masculinity and metrosexuality, and these include the acceptance of homosexuality and the rejection of violence. Anderson (2005a) in his footnotes explains that metrosexuality is noted for enabling a man to take a softer side of heterosexual masculinity. Coad (2008) continues to discuss key aspects of metrosexuality; he refers to an article on salon.com (an extremely popular American online magazine) Coad (2008, p.19 cites Simpson, 2002) whereby two facets of metrosexuality are revealed for academic gaze. These facets include the idea that metrosexuality has direct links to homosexuality, not in a sexual choice but through life style choices. In this way, by commoditising masculinity to vain urbanised males the aesthetic body becomes a central preoccupation.

Vanity highlights the second facet of metrosexuality; which again aligns significantly with homosexuality. Simpson felt in his article that metrosexual vanity appear different in metrosexual lives, compared to how it is experienced in heterosexual lives. In this article he meant that in heterosexuality women are the object of man's desires, however, in metrosexuality as in homosexuality they both hold the male body as the object of desire and objectification. These points link directly to the fact that metrosexuality has no reason to objectify women or make them submissive to the hegemonic masculine norm; while more interestingly the metrosexual male has no interest in making male domination a focus of their power claims (Coad, 2008).

In this same article Simpson (2002) makes direct links to metrosexual masculinity and sport; using David Beckham as a vehicle to demonstrate a highly metrosexual modern male; Coad (2008) described Beckham as the embodiment of metrosexuality. It is impossible to consider the athletic physique without considering them 'sexy' (Pronger, 1999, p.373); Pronger (1999) continues in this vein and cites (Baklsamo, 1998; Bordo, 1993; Crawford, 1984; Featherstone, 1991; Goldstein, 1997; Harvey and Sparks, 1991; Hoberman, 1994) to argue that the sexual, athletic musculature of an athlete is simply a by-product of the profession they engage in. Their bodies fit a contemporary ideal of what is a 'desirable body in consumer culture'.

The voyeuristic element of metrosexual masculinity in sport is now becoming a commodity for sale, the image of the hegemonic man inbound in the metrosexual sports star have developed a term, coined 'spornostar' (abbreviated from sport and pornography). Coad (2008) cites Simpson (2006) and these 'spornostars' are used through the medium of 'spornography' (Coad, 2008 cites Simpson, 2006). For gay culture it is important to consider what makes these spornostars so prolific in team sports; 'competitive sport itself can have homoerotic dimensions; the contact of the playing field, the spectacle of the partially clad body, the steamy environment of the showers and locker room' (Pronger, 1999, p.374).

Rugby spornostars are cashing in on the homoerotic nature of this sport, aware of the homocontent inbound in imaginative practices of competitive sport. The production of calendars are becoming more and more homoerotic; initially sprung from calendars produced by the French rugby team, entitled 'Dieux de Stade' 'Stadium Gods' (Coad, 2008). These calendars presented heterosexual hegemonic sporno rugby stars from the French Rugby team in homoerotically charged photographs; let your imagination run wild. Coad (2008) notes that the first calendar which was released in 2004 turned the French Rugby team into spornostars over night; he continues by stating that the 100,000 copies of the calendar were sold out worldwide and turned this calendar into a collector's piece. This was helped by the production of a '100 minute making of calendar DVD' which also sold in its thousands, a source of voyeuristic spornographic material, embedded in locker room culture.

This rise of the spornostar embedded in the homoerotic gaze, has allowed sports men to indulge in metrosexuality, while embodied in the image of heteronormativity. Ben Cohen, a heterosexual, British, professional rugby player; has been noted for his current appeal centred around the metrosexual male. Each year he has been knocking David Beckham off the top spot of the Times Gay Icon list (Buzinski, 2007; Tipping, 2008). He has been noted for his physical stature and his good looks, but also his ability to embrace his fans within the gay community (Buzinski, 2007); holding gatherings to celebrate them and for them to support of him (Buzinski, 2007). Each year he produces an erotically charged calendar for both the heterosexual female and homosexual gaze. In 2009 Ben Cohen posed in his underwear for 'Attitude' (Fulvio, 2009), a gay magazine for fashion and culture; discussing his views on coming out in sport and the fact that 'he prefers to hang around with gay people', raising the capital he carries within the gay community.

In conclusion the emergence of metrosexuality (life style alignment and the voyeuristic self fulfilment of heterosexual men), heterosexual sportsmen have

become objects of the homosexual/feminine admiration; turning them into spornostars. Referencing Ben Cohen; it can be seen that by becoming a spornostar the Masculine Capital one carries becomes so extreme that they become idols of the subordinate masculine and feminine groups of Hegemonic Masculinity. Finally, by metrosexuality not challenging masculinity, it could be said it is simply reinforcing its social positioning, without hegemonic ideology.

## **2.3 Podoculture**

Literature pertaining to men and their embodied connections to footwear is sparse. The impact of this lack of literature results in the issue that literature used to expose man/shoe relationship will be limited. With this in mind, the key literature that does exist will be used to expose this relationship. This relationship will be termed the foot/shoe dyad in this context.

The literature that is available generally refers to the dress shoe rather than trainers/leisure/sporting footwear, and this review will attempt to try and translate some of these ideas in relation to trainer/leisure/sporting shoes, from a wide variety of tangible sources.

In this section, podosexuality and the podosexual male will be discussed (2.3.1). Firstly, terminology around the concept of podolinguistics will be exposed, laying the foundations of further discussion. The representations of masculine shoes, and the impact of colour will also be exposed here. Homosexual shoes will be elaborated upon, while highlighting the notion of hypermasculine homosexual footwear; there will be connection to fetish and trainers made here. Finally, discussion of the symbolic imagery of the foot and shoe will be exposed and the connotations of this suggested.

In section (2.3.1) the foot/shoe dyad will be exposed and the symbolic imagery associated with this dyad discussed. Consideration in section (2.3.2) will focus on the social impact of sports shoes and the various different names given to athletic

footwear. Reflection will then turn to the role of athletic footwear in enhancing physical attractiveness through health and fitness culture, e.g. podoculture, and here insight will be taken from fashion theory. Subcultures of trainer wearers will be discussed, leading to the exposure of the term, Sneakerisation.

### **2.3.1 Podolinguistics and Podosexuality**

Firstly, consideration will turn to the definition of Podolinguistics as introduced by Rossi (1977), which in turn will introduce the notion of podosexuality; each of these will now be discussed in turn.

Rossi (1977) introduced in his seminal text 'The Sex Life of the Foot and Shoe', this work brought to life the concept of podolinguistics. Rossi (1977) has been the only person to utilise this academic terminology, therefore it should be noted that only his ideas will be exposed here.

Rossi (1977) argued that podolinguistics is the language of feet and shoes. He suggests that podolinguistics is an attributing factor that is ignored in the role of body language. He suggests that depending on our moods our feet are 'pouring out a whole stream-of-consciousness communication' and a 'parade of inner messages' (p.238). Rossi (1977) does not elaborate greatly, however, he does suggest that the shoe is hugely responsible for the podolinguistic signifiers we transmit. With footwear in mind Rossi (1977) considers the term podopsychosomatics, Rossi felt that the foot and shoe play an important role 'in many of our physical, emotional, psychological, psychosexual activities and attitudes' (p.241). It has been suggested in this context, the role of podolinguistics can tell more through body language than the truths and lies we verbally tell (Rossi, 1977).

Rossi (1977) considers the significance of the social construction of the podosexual male. Rossi (1977) suggests that men have fewer erogenous zones than women, and as a consequence impacts how men and women adorn their



feet, including the choice of footwear. Rossi (1977) continues by stating that men artificially decorate their feet to give them some erotic personality. However, it is felt that 'for most men, regardless of their position on the seriousness of dress, the fitting of the feet in appropriate attire constitutes a commercial transaction deserving of at least their limited attention, if only for reasons of comfort and value that tend to impinge less directly on the consumption of other items of clothing' (Breward, 2006, p.223). Rossi (1977) continues by saying that comfort may be a contributing factor, but men wear shoes to heighten their masculinity. Shoes of masculinity are those that are heavy in weight and look, semi-stiff, sturdy, colourless and subdued;

'These styles are often called "classics"-wing –tip brogues, thick soled cordovans, the loafer, moccasin-front patterns, grainy leathers, staidly laced fronts, moderate shapes and toes. The colours run with the gamut from black to brown to black again and maybe with a sporty white for the summer'.

Rossi (1977, p.112)

If we translate this idea of masculinity and footwear across to trainers, 'white' appears to be the colour of masculinity. White is often associated with football lads who wear the crisp clean white Reebok Classics or Adidas Gazelles (Steele, 2005). Lomas *et al.* (2006) acknowledge that some men have turned to ultra-masculine or butch clothing drawn from working class, sporting and vocational dress to highlight their masculinity. Is the reason why most athletic running shoes are associated with the colour white; can masculinity be seen in this context? This thesis will expose this issue further.

The above literature considers the concept of masculine footwear from a heterosexual male perspective, but sources exposed by Lomas *et al.* (2006) Rossi (1977) and Steele (1996) also consider footwear to have a homosexual nature to them. Lomas *et al.* (2006) review clothing in the homosexual community

as having a coded sense of meaning; which they can recognise in others with similar sexual interests; shoes being a key component of this code. Flugel (1930) also adds that clothing is a bodily extension of self. Lomas *et al.* (2006) continues by highlighting that there are three queer modes of footwear; the soft shoe, the coloured shoe and hyper masculine shoes of the 1970's. Steele (1996) discusses homosexual shoes in the context of homosexual fetishism; the boot being the most masculine and dominant form of footwear. Literature pertaining to the theme of scent (odour) and footwear, particularly in relation to homosexuality was clearly evident. In conjunction with the boot, Steele (1996) underpins the theme of homosexual masculinity and fetish by associating this type of footwear with the sense of smell; 'boots with heavy soles and heels that smell of sweat and leather are ultra-masculine' (p.104). Weinburg *et al.* (1995) explores narratives of homosexual and bisexual foot fetishists; one exposes his story about smell, shoes and sexual excitement. The brief narrative demonstrates the clear links between homosexuality, footwear (trainers/boots), smell and fetish.

'As a young kid I would put my brother's basketball sneakers into my pants and masturbate with them. I also recall how the smell of his shoes used to excite me. Around 10-13 I would take his work boots to bed and masturbate with them. As a child, my brother used to hold me down and tickle my feet. I loved it. My brother and I shared a room. I wanted to smell and feel his feet. I did do while he slept. The warmth of his foot against my face triggered an ejaculation'.

(Weinburg *et al.* 1995, p.22)

The above quote aligns not only shoe fetishism and attraction but also the significance of foot attraction. Literature pertaining to feet and their sexual qualities are limited. It could be possible to translate literature regarding men's attraction to the female foot, however, the appearance (including musculature/hair on the foot/size) is extremely different and it could be felt that this would not translate well considering these factors. Taking into consideration

how men perceive the sexual qualities/attractiveness of their own feet/shoes, the gap in the literature is clearly evident; however, at this stage this only continues to demonstrate a marginalised field of research, whereby this proposed thesis could bridge this gap, within a sporting context.

The relationship of the foot and shoe has been identified in some literature as having a symbolic sexual nature (Rossi, 1977; Steele, 1996; Stekel, 1952). Stekel (1952) states that the female foot is a symbol of fruitfulness because it touches the earth while the male foot is the symbol of creation. Stekel (1952) continues by stating that the shoe is symbolic of the vulva and the foot the penis; Steele (1996) extends this metaphor by stating that in homosexual men the shoe is symbolic of the anus and the foot is again symbolic of the penis. Rossi (1977) reinforces the sexual symbolic nature of the feet, by exposing the views of Robert Riley a design consultant from Brooklyn Museum, he states:

‘Most obvious is the male phallic symbolism of the big toe  
and the female symbolism of the clefting between the toes’.

(Rossi, 1977, p.13)

The most important question to ask at this point is what significance do symbolisms have in this proposed thesis? It could be suggested that if you consider the symbolic image of what the foot and shoe represents; the penis and vagina/anus; do we not wear clothes to hide these erotic organs; therefore it could be suggested that shoes hide the unspoken symbolic sexual imagery of the foot. Rossi (1977) notes that to hide the erotic foot, most footwear is designed and worn as podo-erotic art. In additional, taking knowledge from the chosen methodological approach of this thesis, symbolic interpretations are considered part of the analysis process (4.6.2).

To conclude, even though literature is sparse regarding men and footwear, it can be seen that a relationship between the two can be made. The role of

podolinguistics and the podosexuality allows us to gain insight into the potential meanings that feet and shoes have, while making us taking into account the reason as to why a men have chooses to adorn their feet in that certain way. This can be the type of shoe, through to the colour of them, all with the potential aim of achieving different podolinguistic messages.

Fashion theory dictates that queer shoes exist and that these align with the concept of fetish, especially with regard to sneakers and leather footwear. Sexual symbolic relations of the foot and shoe and the production of the footwear that hides the foot are referred to as podo-erotic. It can be considered that the foot and shoe represents either the vagina and penis or the anus and the penis; and the big toe is more phallic than consciously considered. The unspoken awareness of Podolinguistics exists in our subconsciousness and further open discourse is needed. It can be seen with greater insight utilising a broad spectrum of literature, links can be made between the podo-erotic male, footwear choice, the subconscious connotations of footwear and its relation to fetish, and essentially commodity.

### **2.3.2 Podoculture and Sneakerisation**

Insight will now turn to the role of Podoculture and Sneakerisation, in light of podolinguistics and podosexuality.

Sports shoes are objects of avid consumer spending (Gill, 2006) and are inbound into everyday living. Where ever we turn sports shoes on display; the athletes on the television, the lady next door, the hoody on the street corner, the joggers running past us on the street and the fitness gods at the gym. It is of significance to state here that 'the trainer' has many synonyms and here is a few which will be used interchangeably throughout this thesis; these include trainers, sneakers, kicks, pumps, plimsolls, runners and gym shoes (Heard, 2003).

Steele (2005) suggests that sport shoe manufactures are only interested in biomechanical function of their footwear; including traction, stability and support; she goes on to suggest that sneakers are no longer meant for working out at the gym, but are today's most fashionable essential item. Gill (2006, p.374) supports this statement by reassuring us that trainers have become essential equipment for contemporary living. Nevertheless, it should be stated that in the field of academia and research, there is vast amounts of literature that suggests the biomechanics of footwear and performance is integral to future athletic development, not fashion (McNair and Marshall, 1994; Wong *et al.*, 2007).

Retrospectively, trainers have not always been such a commodity and an essential component of everyday living. We might ask ourselves how have sports shoes managed to saturate our societal habits.

Since the late 1970s health and fitness became particularly seductive as promotion of performance enhancing footwear for athletes, also become available to the general public (Gill, 2006). Gill (2006, p.374) continues to state that 'bettering the self, physically and psychologically, was central to the cult of fitness and health spearheaded by jogging and aerobic trends. Fitness and health become synonymous with enhanced attractiveness and success. The significance of this quote highlights one particular theme; attractiveness, which will be paramount and interwoven throughout this proposed thesis. Attractiveness in this thesis will not only relate to the clothes that we wear, but also the physicality of attractiveness of the body including the lower limbs (feet and legs). With respect to fashion, Flugel (1930) argues that the ultimate purpose of fashion whether that be overt and conscious is to 'add to the sexual attractiveness of their wearers, and to stimulate the sexual interest of admirers of the opposite sex and the envy of rivals of the same sex' (p.26). It is clear to see that there is a complex model that occurs between the consumers of fashion, which not only heightens the products own significance, but also inter-relates to social and

cultural phenomena's between those consumers who wear the products; in this instance trainers.

Davis (1994) believes that fashion serves in social differentiation, social integration and the psychological needs that fashion satisfies; most significantly Davis (1994) highlights the fact that what connects makers, purveyors and consumers of fashion is meaning. Gill (2006) discusses the fact that meaning and trainers have become such a lifestyle commodity that this type of footwear has almost become an extension of our personalities, tastes and interests; Lurie (1981, p.94) also adds that 'is clothing not virtually a visual language, with its own distinct grammar, syntax, and vocabulary?' Linking the cultural meanings, the extensions of personality and the image of clothing being a virtual language, it is no wonder that trainers have become cultural symbols of status to youth dress and leisure culture of our society (Gill, 2006). It could be suggested that trainers have their own linguistic discourses, which we could call podolinguistics (Rossi, 1977).

Steele (2005, p.160-163) interviewed Richard Wharton; Director of Offspring and Office (two of the largest trainer retailers in the UK). During her interview she asked Wharton what types of people wear different kinds of trainers; 'he drew a pyramid, and explained that at the bottom of the pyramid were the clueless; that have no idea what to wear with trainers. At the top of the pyramid he drew the Soho trendies, because in London they tend to work in Soho or in neighbouring Covent Garden; they live and die in a pair of sneakers, and wouldn't be seen dead in the wrong pair. He continues to state that Designer Bof exists; they have no brand alliance, and they only wear the latest style that is all the rage. Finally, he talks of football lads, who wear trainers that are comfortable and classic; they never wear anything outrageous and will only be seen in a crisp white pair of Reebok Classics or Adidas Gazelles'. This accurately parallels Heard (2003) who argues that sneakers have become 'bastions' of the streets, dance floors or terraces'; rarely do many of these trainers see sport. The author continues to

state that trainers are now associated with more youth tribes than with the basketball court or running track. If we refer back to cultural significance of youth and footwear choice; Gill (2006) exposes that included in these cultural discourses are the values that youth culture place on their purchased commodity. These values include fashionable style, professional creditability, dreams of fame and the associated attitude, which is ultimately endorsed through the promotion of that particular trainer. It is essential to highlight here, that literature pertaining to athletes and their cultural discourses surrounding sneakers; is practically non-existent; demonstrating the fact that further research is required in this area.

Nevertheless, the ancestry of sneaker fashion culture still lies at the roots of sport and exercise; with the latest performance enhancing footwear developing more rapidly than ever; recently termed sneakerisation (Gill, 2006). Sneakerisation (Gill, 2006) is a definition used to describe the multiplication of inexpensive goods such as trainers, which have a rapid turnover playing on the power of brand identity. This suggests that there is a polarisation between what the consumer believes they are buying into (identity, culture, personality) and what they are actually buying into (a cash cow).

Sports footwear has a multitude of synonyms; its relationship to fitness and fashion is an integral part of social and cultural existence. By following the culture of fitness and the athletes that wear sports trainers, we are selling ourselves to society by being fitter, wealthier and more attractive. To take this model of thinking further, it is suggested that an inter-relationship exists between the cultural and social phenomena of fashion footwear; they sit within a hierarchical structure defined by Richard Wharton from the clueless to the designer boff. Through making key choices about the footwear you put on your feet you are subconsciously sending out a message for all to read; the transmission of this message is known as podolinguistics; whereby the footwear has its own distinct, grammar, syntax and vocabulary (Rossi, 1977). While new trainers are released and produced monthly; the sneakerisation of footwear adds fuel to the fire of

brand identity and consumer culture; providing a never ending cyclic event. In summary the sociology of footwear culture is inbound in a multi dimensional encompassing model that includes fitness, appearance, podolinguistics, cultural/brand identity and consumer culture.

In conclusion, it can be noted that podoculture is the overall term used to describe the sociocultural factors surrounding shoes and feet. These podocultural aspects include the synonymous relationship that sporting-shoes have with social popularity, fitness and successful contemporary living. Consideration is given to the role of fashion theory and podoculture and it's associated with the aforementioned concept of podolinguistics. Furthermore in support of podoculture and its association with fashion theory, consideration is given to the groups of people that undertake the consumption of footwear as a symbolic status. With all these concepts in mind, consideration is given to the over production of cheap fashion sporting footwear to fulfil the needs of the masses, this is called Sneakerisation.

## **2.4 Conclusions**

In conclusion, it can be noted that masculinity in sport is shaped early on in childhood years, through sex segregation and institutionalised attitudes towards masculinity (2.2.1). This Chapter then considered the role of Orthodox Masculinity, Hegemonic Masculinity and Masculine Capital (2.2.2). Insight was gained into the differences between each of these concepts and their relation to each other. It also reviewed the role of homo/sexuality and homophobia in sport (2.2.3), this highlighted the issue of being 'out' in sport and the fact that being 'out' in, often lead to marginalisation, or embodying heteronormative behaviours. The role of metrosexuality needed to be discussed in the context of sport, since there seems to be a movement toward sportsmen allowing their bodies to be a power/fetish commodity. Through embodying the homoerotic gaze (or female) gaze, metrosexuality is challenging Hegemonic Masculinity, as it currently exists. Metrosexuality highlights the existence of an inclusive masculinity. Finally,



discussion turned to the role of Podoculture and the connections men make with their footwear. Podolinguistics and podosexuality (2.3.1) were introduced, these were concepts that had not been discussed fully for over thirty years, and this is the first piece of empirical research to extend these ideas into a new research context. Finally more detail was given to the role of podoculture and the mass consumption of sporting-shoes was also exposed, this introduced the term Sneakerisation.

It is felt that this literature review provides the essential theoretical structures, to mesh the wide variety of different literature together. In essence this part of the literature review is highlighting the importance and role of masculinity, the theoretical constructions of masculinity, while demonstrating its relationship to homosexuality and metrosexuality. Finally through exposing Podolinguistic qualities of shoes and the impact of podoculture on masculinity, it is hoped that a relationship between sportsmen to embodied masculine sports-shoe wear can be foreseen.

In summary, it is clear that this review of the literature, has taken a coherent journey, which demonstrates empirical research that supports the Primary Research Questions. Nonetheless, there is still one aspect that hasn't been discussed in full, and that is, the role of Queer Theory in dismantling Queered masculinities and homosociality in the sporting culture which will follow in Chapter 3.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **THEORETICAL CONSTRUCTS OF QUEER THEORY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This thesis is underpinned epistemologically with a Queer Theoretical stance. Queer Theory plays a significant role in dismantling masculinity and heteronormativity, by attempting to provide a new perspective in seeking answers for the Primary Research Questions. Indeed, Primary Research Question 5 takes advantage most significantly of understanding a Queered stance of masculinity, however, Queering these research questions is represented in all of the five questions.

In an attempt to deconstruct the various theoretical perspectives that encapsulate Queer Theory, each approach of theoretical thinking will be discussed in turn and discussion of analysis and the intentions of queer theory will be considered simultaneously. This Chapter is formulated in a way to provide an analysis and critique of Queer Theory, which takes into account the 'Positioning of Queer Theory' (3.2) and the theoretical and historical background of Queer Theory and its relevance to the study.

Along with the above this Chapter will discuss the difficulty in defining Queer Theory as a theoretical tool (3.3), this acknowledges the parallel poles of thinking regarding this theory, and the associated literature embedded in this debate. Moreover Chapter 3 considers the role of Queer Theory and its connections to identity and sexuality (3.4), whilst providing insight into the analytical motivations for Queer Theory itself. The review will turn to the role of heterosexuality, hegemony and heteronormativity (3.5), whilst again considering the role of Queer Theory within this multifaceted relationship, and simultaneously the consciousness of the research questions.

Once the foundations of Queer Theory have been exposed, this Chapter will be then to reflect upon these foundations, to develop the discussion of binary categorisation (3.5) and the overarching impact Queer Theory has on the exposition of power relations and the acknowledgment of subordinate groups such as those in sport.

Consideration will then turn to homosociality (a theme that runs through many of the primary research questions, especially PRQ1, 3 and 5); this concept has a significant role within this body of work, and has a formative foundation in Queering society (3.6). A multidisciplinary approach to 'Queering' social constructs will then be discussed (3.7), giving insight into the variety of different academic disciplines, that have utilised Queer Theory. In particular Media Studies will be discussed, this discipline has made the greatest steps in utilising Queer in a variety of different constructs.

Finally, discussion will turn to the role of Queering within the sporting context (3.8) demonstrating Queer Theories applicability to the epistemological stance that underpins the analysis and exposure of 'Queering' masculinity/footwear/homosociality and sport, facilitating the Primary Research Questions. A concluding statement will summarise this Chapter 3 (3.9).

### **3.2 Positioning of Queer Theory**

'Queer' as a word within the context of Queer Theory, can be understood within a multi-faceted framework, encompassing both language and the historical background embedded within lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered (LGBT) culture. King (2008) states that, 'it goes without saying that Queer is a contested term' (p.421). The connotations of violence or homophobia run through the etymology of the word (Thomas, 2009), when we think of homophobic verbal abuse, we should have Queer theory at the forefront of our minds. This enables us to understand the alignment of uncomfortable dissonance between academic theory and the use of the word 'Queer'. We might also think of Queer in a more

comfortable association, remembering the old English saying 'there's nowt as queer as folk', whereby Morland and Willox (2005) feels this use of queerness, 'calls for a celebration of a diversity of identities, but also for a cultural diversity that surpasses the notion of identity' (p.11). Stein and Plummer (1996, p.133) felt that Queer Theory rose from a rallying cry for new ways of thinking. For many scholars, the term gay and lesbian studies did not seem inclusive enough. Alsop, Fitzsimons and Lennon (2002) argue that due to the gay political activism of the 1990's, have positively reclaimed the 'Queer' word to reinforce this positive gay social movement. From this perspective Queer Theory has been called an 'epistemological extension of an ontological position' (Giffney, 2009a).

So what is Queer Theory and where did it come from? Queer Theory falls within the tenets of post-structuralism; Sullivan (2003) argues that since Queer Theory has a post-structuralist feminist positioning within the literature, there is association with 'rejection, or at least critique of humanist logic and aspirations. It therefore involves a rethinking of concepts such as 'meaning', 'truth', 'subjectivity', 'freedom', 'power', and so on' (p.39). Namaste (1996) also states that Queer Theory is 'heavily influenced by poststructuralism, an area of inquiry considered to be textualist, theoretically elite, and politically suspect by many Anglo-American social scientists' (p.194).

The true founder of Queer Theory, Butler (1990; 1993) introduced key ideas with the seminal works of *Gender Trouble* and *Bodies that Matter* respectively. In addition it could be said that Sedgwick (1985) started to lay the foundations of Queer studies earlier with the introduction of *Between Men* and more recently and at the same time as Butler (1990) the publication of *Epistemology of the Closet* (Sedgwick, 1990), clearly with foundations supported by Foucault (1987a; 1987b). Both academics were interested in the dismantling of sex/uality and the construction of binaries power caught up in these constructed relations. The role of identity and performativity are at the focus of these constructions, Butler within these works introduces and develops the notion of 'subversive bodily acts', by

trying to develop an understanding and theoretical positioning of the politics of subversion (Kirby, 2006). Giffney (2009a, p.2) states that Queer Theory 'is more often embraced to point to the fluidity of identity, recognising identity as a historically-contingent and socially constructed fiction that prescribes and proscribes against certain feelings and actions'. Significant to this body of work, the role of embodied performativity and homosociality, (Sedgwick 1985; 1990), are both integral to the overarching epistemology examined throughout. However, it must be added that with the consideration of sexuality as a product of social structure and agency (Valocchi, 2005), performativity and embodiment are highlighted ten fold.

Finally of particular note to this research is the introduction and discussion of heteronormative deconstruction, King (2008), particularly reflects upon the work of Butler and Sedgwick, whereby she argues that heteronormativity are 'institutions, structures of understanding, and practice orientations that make heterosexuality not only coherent- that is, organised as a sexuality' (p.424). The role of heteronormativity in Butlers' (1990; 1993) work, reiterates that heterosexuality set the tone for the normal and accepted within society, and that through this process homosexuality is constructed as the binary opposite, and is considered unnatural and submissive; in this respect the role of power relations and homosexual domination come to the fore. It could be suggested that in this body of work, considering the role of homosexual and heterosexual sportsmen, the above concepts will be particularly meaningful to deconstruct.

In conclusion, it is hoped that through highlighting the historical positioning of Queer Theory, and that through creating the epistemological and ontological foundations a set of knowledge has been created to feed into the following more detailed concepts of Queer Theory. This critical feminist perspective on dismantling the social construction of sexuality, identity, embodiment and heteronormativity will be paramount in a body of work such as this.

### **3.3 Difficulties in Defining Queer Theory**

This Chapter will therefore try and expose/present, the key integral elements of Queer Theory that are essential for the development and understanding of this thesis, and the reasons why it is supporting a pro Queer Theory approach. It is hoped that through the exposure of Theory and an explanation of how this theory has been used in other sport studies; an active highlighting of this theory will be shown to underpin and interweave this theses' ontological stance while ultimately strengthening it epistemologically.

In brief, Queer Theory is the deconstruction/discussion of sexuality (Chaudwell, 2006; Sykes, 2006; Nylund; 2007), however, it is not that simple, since Queer Theory is often difficult to define (Sullivan, 2003). Jagose (2009) supports this argument by stating that, attempts to define and describe a theory such as this are challenging; especially when one considers the trajectory of Queer Theory since it 'insists on radical unknowability of its future formations' (p.158). This formulation of Queer Theory is supported by Nylund (2007) who suggests that 'queerness is temporal, future orientated, always in progress, and avoidant of fixed positions' (p.18). Aligning with this outlook, Sykes (2006, p. 17) cites Fuss (1991) who states that the 'dream of a common definition' for queer theory 'or no definition at all is simply that – a dream'; to add to this King (2008) suggests that there is little consensus about its history, its potency as an analytical tool, or how it should be deployed' (p421). Giffney (2009a, p.2) refers to queer as 'more often embraced to point to fluidity in identity, recognising identity as a historically contingent and socially constructed fiction that prescribes and proscribes against certain feelings or actions'. Halperin (1995) points to the fact that by definition queer is 'whatever is at odds with the normal, the legitimate, the dominant' (p.62). Queering research and developing a new language within which the terminology is currently vague and new, it highlights the adolescence of this theory, and in turn as a subordinate movement (which in itself, fits into the theoretical understanding of queer 'whatever is at odds with the normal, the legitimate, the dominant' (Halperin, 1995, p.62)). However, how do we use the 'queer' within the

context of literature, such as this thesis? With respect to this issue and with a sense of irony I refer to Giffney (2009a, p1), whereby in a Chapter entitled 'Introduction: The 'q' Word' she states;

'The title of this chapter raises more questions than it answers. What does 'The "q" Word' refer to? Why use 'q', which is more properly a letter, rather than spell out the word in full? Is there a reason for employing a lower case 'q' rather than a capital letter to represent this particular word? Are the quotation marks significant? Does the appearance of the term 'the' and the singular form 'word' mean that 'q' refers to one and only one term? Is the 'q' operating here as an adjective (is there something 'q' about 'the word') or a noun (is 'q' *the* word that we should take note of)? If I am to offer the information that I intend for 'q' in this instance to stand in for 'queer' are we any closer to discovering what "The "q" Word signifies? Let us focus more closely on "The "queer" Word for a moment: am I intending for queer to represent a noun ('x' is queer, queerness), adjective (queer 'x'), verb (to queer 'x', queering 'x') or adverb ('x-ing' queerly)? Each question leads, not to resolution, but to another series of questions, thus continually frustrating our will to know, opening up a space of and for desire'.

(Giffney, 2009a, p1)

The irony that is referred to is the lack of fulfilment as a reader, whereby no actual answers are given, but more questions are raised and thrown into the academic ether. It might make us question the reasons for using a model/analytical tool that creates such dissonance between understanding and the creation/analysis of new knowledge. Nonetheless, the bombardment of theoretical questioning and the failure to accept a true understanding of the 'q' word; allows flexibility and a nonconformist approach to the use of the 'Queer' within the literature.

Morland and Willox (2005) suggest the use of 'queer' can be related to the fact that gay men and lesbians share a common 'disenfranchised' understanding, as to the relationship of difference between homosexual/heterosexual; this 'queerness' or difference can only be understood as a non-normative sexuality which 'transcends' binary distinction. Giffney (2009a) states that with the ontological positioning of 'queer theory, a theory for, about and by 'queers', Queers' theory in other words' (p.4). In this context Queer Theory suggests that it belongs to, and has ownership by the Queer community. Morland and Willox (2005) argue that to use a political tool such as Queer Theory, one should belong to the community in which the title encapsulates. Morland and Willox (2005, p.10-11) argue:

'Why is it so strangely legitimate for a heterosexual to claim queerness because he or she feels a dissatisfaction from traditional definitions of heterosexuality? .....the straight (most often white) academic says she (or he, more often) is queer. There is a huge jump being from studying/teaching gay and lesbian work to pronouncing oneself queer'.

These authors highlight and scrutinise the fact that one should be queer to be able to use and belong to queers' theory. They believe to make the jump from simply studying/teaching gay and lesbian studies to using queers' theory as a political tool 'is both intellectually and politically dangerous', (Morland and Willox, 2005, p. 11).

Therefore, it is important to note that the author is aware to consider the humanistic side of this theory; that through language people can transcend a binary order that exists within the truth of society; MacCormack (2009, p.110) suggests that 'one must presume the consistency of all subjects as first belonging to a hermeneutic ontological system'. This thesis aims to use the terminology of Giffney (2009a), which demonstrates a real understanding of the humanistic problems of dealing with 'queering' through language. Giffney's



(2009a) ability to question 'queer' in depth, while at the same time using language to signify 'queer', enables flexibility of 'queer' language and enables this thesis to ask even more questions, as to the use of 'q' word within a theoretical framework, and through the analysis of queering data.

We might question why this theory is so difficult to define? It could be suggested that one often has to consider the broad range of theoretical ideas/discourses surrounding Queer Theory, before Queer Theory can be understood and integrated into a thesis' political and epistemological stance; especially since it is considered to be a 'epistemological extension of a ontological position' (Giffney, 2009a, p.4). Of most interest and significance to this thesis, is the consideration given to the practical elements of sexuality in sport; Eves (2004) argues that the main criticism of Queer Theory is the fact that it has a highly textual focus and it fails to continually appreciate and pay attention to the details of structural and everyday practices, such as sport. Sykes (2006) does contradict this statement by arguing that, using Queer Theory in sport research (such as this thesis) enables researchers to gain insight into the 'issues of embodiment, health and the body in sporting contexts' (p.13). Eng (2006) continues along this vein by highlighting the usefulness of queering sport and analysing the theoretical outcomes; she suggests that through the studying of sport and social construction categories of typical characteristics can be pulled out, these include, 'competition and cooperation among participants, the body as a site for experiencing and communicating, access to physical intimacy, nakedness in same sex situations, male dominance, homosociality, and finally heteronormativity' (p.12). Considering these pertinent factors, statements and the interlinking but insecurity of Queer Theory; a well defined frame work for this thesis can be demonstrated, however, Queer Theory and its key components need to be discussed in more detail.

In conclusion it is evident to see the diverse nature of defining Queer Theory, however, it is note worthy that the integration of such a theory can be flexible and multi-purposeful for a research project such as this.

### **3.4 Identity/anti-identitarianism and Queer Theory**

As an opening statement Caudwell (2006) states that the intention of Queer Theory is to give marginalised or previously denied or silenced identities, visibility; Sykes (2006) and Nylund (2007) continues and supports this statement by arguing that Queer Theory refuses and challenges the notion of fixed identities. King (2008) also suggests that a key feature of Queer Theory is an anti-identitarianistic approach. Though, as expected, with a model that critiques and refuses conformity and social normalising structures, a 'true' definition of anti-identitarianism is not stated. However, through exposure of the literature, King (2008) suggests that if we consider looking at the failure of identity, while at the same time turning to what 'the potential theorists find in the exclusions that are performed by iterations of identity' (p.422). Giffney (2009a, p.2) suggest that queer is more about a 'resistance' to 'identity categories' or 'easy categorisation' 'marking a disidentification from the rigidity with which identity categories continue to be enforced and from beliefs that such categories continue to be enforced and from the beliefs that such categories are immovable'.

Morland and Willox (2005) suggest that if Queer Theory is not about 'identity' then it is about 'action and ways of living', therefore we need to consider the fact that the sense of Queer Theory could be about the 'politics of shared life styles' (p.11). As is commonly discussed, identity is considered to be a socially constructed phenomena (Butler, 1990; Foucault, 1987a; 1987b; Sykes, 2006); in addition to the view point, Eves (2004) considers the fact that Queer Theory has reconceptualised the notion of sexual identity to include the additional facet that sexual identity is 'shifting and unstable' (p.482). At the same time it is shaped and stabilised through an institutionalisation in social culture and structure (Valocchi, 2005). Chaudwell (2006) exposes the fact that Queer Theory engages with

identity to achieve its aims as a theoretical view point; she continues by stating that the aims of Queer Theory include: 'exposing the constructedness of sexuality; exposing the illusion/fiction of sexual identity; avoiding normative and essentialist identities; resisting regimes of 'normal'; violating compulsory sex/gender relations; dismantling binary gender relations; and undermining heteronormative hegemonic discourses' (p.2). Valocchi (2005) states that queer analysis, questions the understanding of sexual identity by considering individual practices and affiliations with sex objects of choice. For example, this thesis through expansion of the literature review appears to touch on the affiliation of sexual practice and sexual identity and its affiliations with shoes in a sociocultural-sexual nature. It is hoped that through the argumentation and the dismantling of practices of sex and gender, the embodiment of identity cannot be simply reduced to a category of either heterosexual or homosexual; the practices and modes of embodiment are used to identify the basis of identity formation. Skyes (2006) and Valocchi (2005) continue to develop the use of Queer Theory further by arguing that through discussion of sexual categories and identity, one must consider the intersectionality of social difference across these categories of identity; thus looking at identity from several axes of social difference (Valocchi, 2005, p.754).

It is pertinent to conclude this brief review of identity/anti-identitarianism and Queer Theory, with a quote from Giffney (2009a, p.3), whereby the acknowledgement of such a theoretical stance aids in exposing the reality of identity truths:

'When signalling an unapologetic, anti-assimilationist stance, queer champions those who refuse to be defined in the terms of, and by the (more) codes of behaviour and identification set down by, the dominant society'.

Giffney (2009a, p.3)

### **3.5 Binary, Heterosexuality/Heteronormativity and Queer Theory**

It is impossible to discuss identity within the concept of Queer Theory without considering binary relationships; Nylund (2007) puts forward the idea that one of the primary tenets of Queer Theory is to interrogate and dismantling the notion of the heterosexual/homosexual binary. However, it is felt that before we can discuss or even understand the binaries of sexuality i.e. male/female or in this context heterosexuality/homosexuality; the role of heterosexuality and the role of social heteronormativity should be initially exposed.

Previously in this thesis (2.2.2), heteronormativity and its role in Hegemonic Masculinity Theory and sport have been highlighted; it is of paramount significance that sport and heteronormative practices are at the crux of Queer Theory, hence it use as an epistemological stance within this thesis; thus a brief discussion of heteronormativity and its alignment to binary and Queer Theory will follow. King (2008) in her seminal essay reviewing Queer Theory and its historical use in sport and sexual politics notes 'A critique of Heteronormativity' as one of the key five features that appears in literature pertaining to Queer Theory and its critique. Butler (1990) suggests although it is not impossible to escape heteronormativity while interrogating/unpacking the surrounding discourses of normative sexual practices, it is still possible to undermine it. It has been stated that we can understand the role of heteronormativity as normal (Chaudwell, 2006); as well as a understanding heterosexuality as a natural and stable notion (Sykes, 2006); Valocchi (2005) on the other hand suggests that the reason that it is the norm, is that it continues to be an 'uninterrogated norm'; suggesting that society doesn't question this apparently fixed norm, thus allowing it to thrive in its current state of being in lay social discourse. Sullivan (2003) develops the discussion of heterosexuality and its practices by stating that 'heterosexuality is a complex matrix of discourses, institutions and so on, that has become normalised in our culture, thus making particular relationships, lifestyles, and identities seem natural, ahistorical, and universal' (p.39).

Eng (2006, p.13) and King (2008, p.424) both cite Bertland and Warner (2000) who define heteronormativity as structures of understanding;

‘By heteronormativity we mean the institutions, structures of understanding, and practical orientations that make heterosexuality seem not only coherent - that is, organised as a sexuality – but also privileged. Its coherence is always provisional, and its privilege can take several (sometimes contradictory) forms: unmarked, as the basic idiom or moral accomplishment. It consists less of norms that could be summarised as a body doctrine than a sense of rightness produced in contradictory manifestations – often unconscious, immanent to practice or institutions’.

Foucault (1987a; 1987b) supports this creation of heteronormativity, but suggests that through what he calls ‘grand narrative’ or more simply put ‘normalising discourses’; social construction of the norm is always discussed in a binary comparison from the norm to the ideal; the comparison or gap between the two creates a difference that demotes a sexuality for instance as an aberration e.g. homosexuality as a deviant. Queer Theory at this point begins to examine the dividing line between unacceptable and acceptable sexual practices and how they are socially constructed in relation to heteronormativity (norm) (Sykes, 2006). From a Queer theoretical perspective, heterosexuality and its practices are understood (hegemonic behaviour) to be inbound in a relationship of power and knowledge (Sullivan, 2003). Of most importance here, is the exposure of ‘power’ relations within the context of Queer Theory. Power itself is a critical linchpin of heteronormativity and hegemonic identities; they sustain binary structures and therefore reinforce the reality of subordinate sexualities. Valocchi (2005, p.756) states that ‘sociologists tend to view power as an external force operating through social institutions to limit the life chances of some groups and expand those of other groups’. Foucault (1987a) notes that power is clearly

interwoven within the concept of sexuality and subordination; and that if 'repression has indeed been the fundamental link between power, knowledge and sexuality since the classical age, it stands to reason that we will not be able to free ourselves from it' (p.5). Stein and Plummer (1996) note that societies existing strategies to reinforce binary, demonstrate that the notion of minority at its centre, in the form of 'other'; and while this 'other' or minority exists then binary will be left intact. King (2008) develops the motives of heteronormativity, suggesting that by analysing and considering heteronormative practices within academia, we can 'trace' how heteronormativity through domination of sub-sexualities 'shapes social worlds of homosexuals' (p.424).

A key component to the structuring of heteronormative culture is that which is spoken through discourse. Chaudwell (2009) refers to the fact that work carried out by Heather Sykes into the queering identities in sport, has particularly taken note of movement from 'identity politics' to a 'critique of heteronormative speech, discourses and scripts' (p.224).

Through this discussion of heteronormativity and the challenges faced through a Queer Theory lens perspective; it can be seen that not everything is as simple as it may seem. The dilemmas of power (Foucault, 1987a; 1987b) and the sustainability of heteronormative politics are inbound within heteronormative speech, action, discourse and behaviour. Through sustaining these practices and the inter-related power struggles it is not surprising that binary models within society continue to be reinforced. It is at this point discussion of binary order and its relation to sexuality, power and Queer Theory will be discussed.

Valocchi (2005) discusses in detail the impact of binary and that a key element of Queer Theory is the deconstruction of this binary order. Valocchi (2005) argues that because binary is a naturally occurring phenomena, which is implicit in 'social cues, practices and subjectivities' (p.753) it is clearly aligned sexuality. Binaries for example include; male/female, heterosexual/homosexual,

normal/deviant, however, this thesis initially focuses on the heterosexual/homosexual binary; (although it is without a doubt that as this thesis has developed, the binaries implicit in within the shoe/foot/sexuality triad have come to the forefront of this thesis discussion, and de/reconstruction of them becomes increasingly important). Valocchi (2005) continues by stating that because these naturally occurring binaries are a given; there is a form of normative alignment that runs through them; this normative alignment acts more than an ideological construct, it simply naturally occurs. He continues to state that if we do not consider how these binaries are formed and normatively defined across society; these categories/binaries allow inequalities to be constructed within them; as well as exerting a power over those that do not align normatively within the binary constructs. The author suggests the power between binaries produces subcultures and subcategories within this socially constructed phenomena, while at the other end producing hegemonic categories and cultures in line with hegemonic masculinity.

In conclusion, Queer Theory, therefore turns these binaries on its head, by deconstructing the notion of binary, foregrounding them with concepts of the constructedness of sex, gender, sexuality classification systems and resisting the urge to congeal these together and reforming binary classifications (Valocchi, 2005). Queer theory is interested in dismantling dominant norms of categorisation (such as hegemony) as a product of socially constructed binary formation, and it interrogates its relation to the fiction of heterosexuality and its norms (Nylund, 2007). Valocchi (2005) continues the argumentation of binary formation and Queer Theory analysis, by suggesting that Queer Theory considers that gulf between lived experience and ideology; and that Queer Theory has a focus on deviant cases, anatomies, genders, sexual practices that do not fit a binary code norm. Sykes (2006, p.16) summarises by stating that Queer Theory has found a niche, whereby theorists can think about the construction of heterosexuality, the relations between hetero and other; and

finally theories and practices that place queerness at the centre of order to transform homosexual, gay, lesbian theory into a general social space.

### **3.6 Embodying Homosociality**

In this section brief consideration will be given to the role of embodiment within the homosocial setting, however, the majority of this subsections focus will be that of the latter. Insight will be given to the literature that surrounds homosociality, and the significance that this will have on this body of work.

To introduce homosociality within the sporting context, we need to turn to Sedgwick (1985), she reports that homosociality/homosocial is the bonding of men from a non-sexualised perspective, Bird (1996) adds to this by stating that homosociality refers to same sex social relations. Sedgwick (1985) utilises the analysis of literary texts to devolve the acknowledgement that trafficking of women results in the significance of 'desire', desire in this context is considered to be that of 'an effective or social force or bond, which can be manifested in diverse ways including hostility' (Flood, 2008, p. 341), it could be suggested that 'hostility' in this context could be referred to as homophobia (Sedgwick, 2005). Pease (2000) contributes that homosociality exists as a result of homophobia, and this is a way to purify male relationships so that sexual connotations are reduced. In addition Peterson and Anderson (2009) consider these desires to be a way of policing homophobic stigma through heteronormative practices; homosociality is used as a way to analyse these blurry lines between encounters of men of same sex and homosexual identifications. In relation to sport, Eng (2006a) posits that due to the heteronormative powers of masculinity in sport, homosocial is a vehicle through which homosexuality can go unnoticed and exist silenced 'permeating into discourses of normality' (p.53)

Flood (2008) considers the significant impact of homosociality on Masculinity Theory, and visa versa; Flood (2008) cites Kimmel (1994) who argues that men's lives are developed and organised in homosocial settings to produce markers of



manhood such as 'occupation, wealth, power, status, physical prowess and sexual achievement' (p.341), there are direct links that can be made here in connection with Masculine Capital (David and Brannon, 1976). It should be noted that these markers that are produced, align constructively with hegemonic Masculinity Theory and the associated embodied social power imbalances to subordinate masculinities and women (Kiesling, 2005). Bird (1996) agreed that male homosociality encourages normative gender inequalities and dominance of particular hegemonic masculinities. Flood (2008) adds that many homosocial settings e.g. militaries, bureaucracies often function through the marginalisation and subordination of women. Sedgwick (1985) also suggested that homosocial within social power imbalance terms, suggests that homosocial encourages researchers to analyse these social bonds which keep men in power.

Considering the role of women and subordination of marginalised groups, Flood (2008) feels that homosocial relations of heterosexual men have received little recognition. Flood (2008) believes that homosociality organises male-female sociosexual relations for heterosexual men in four different ways, these include 'male-male friendships take priority over male-female relations, and platonic relationships with women are dangerously feminising and rare, if not impossible. Second, sexual activity is a key path to masculine status, and other men are the audience, always imagined and sometimes real, for one's sexual activities. Third, heterosexual sex itself can be the medium through which male bonding is enacted. Last, men's sexual storytelling is shaped by homosocial masculine cultures' (p.342).

Reflecting on this body of work, and the concepts under investigation, consideration needs to be given to the interaction of embodying homosociality (Wellard, 2009), i.e. tactility, touching, the experience of embodiment and male-male bonding. Insight will be taken from two research papers, which consider the roles of homosociality, male-bonding and masculinity.

McCormack (2011) in his educational study looking at male bonding in sixth form, states that traditionally, tactility between boys in school is limited, since any suspicion of homosexuality, reproduces masculine hierarchies. However, in his research McCormack (2011) reports that homosocial tactility amongst boys is on the increase, he reviews three sixth form colleges, whereby at the first college the students 'profess pro-gay attitudes, and denounce homophobia, and interact with a true physical closeness between them. In the second college, physical tactility is also noticed but there is less continued physical touch, here the students hug, but this is also situated with no homophobic discourse. In the final college, he notes there is very limited physical contact, but this is most probably due to the fact that these students come from troubled backgrounds and their structuring of heteronormative boundaries are different also. McCormack concludes that in homosocial environments such as all boy school, homophobia is on the decrease, while homosocial tactility is positively on the increase.

In the second study, Kaplan (2006) considers the homosocial interactions of thirty Israeli men who share a common background of military socialisation. The aim of Kaplan's (2006) research was to analyse how 'male friends communicate intimacy in public spaces with diverse social and organisational settings' (p.571). Some of the key findings from Kaplan's (2006) research, regarding homosociality, have some direct supportive conclusions that defend the epistemological and ontological structure of this study. Kaplan (2006) found that men's joking-relationship were ways of experiencing a shared language, through which, language endorses closeness. He develops his research by suggesting, 'Nicknames, Curses, and Coded Meanings' are basic signifiers of affection and intimacy, in homosocial bonding environments, Through humorous interactions 'verbal and bodily' expressions send unclear signifiers to other men which draws them into deeper inter-personal interaction, 'generating a dynamic of seduction' in homosocial environments (Kaplan, 2006, p. 590).

The 'homosocial embrace' is a term that was developed through Kaplan's research to expose 'softer male gestures'. These homosocial embraces' included linking arms and hugging, however, in the public gaze lines were drawn whereby the men would engage physically, but would also perform in a safeguarded manner prevent suspicion of exposing desire for other men. Finally, humour in the homosocial embrace was used as a method of safeguarding against homophobic discourse and while homosocial bodily contact was practice out in the open and with humour it 'defies immediate labelling as too intimate and therefore as homoerotic' (Kaplan, 2006, p.591).

In conclusion, homosociality is a key component to the Queer Theory debate makes direct links to the embodied experience of men in homosocial settings, it is particularly critical when this research considers the homosocial sporting environment. It can be noted that homosociality, is a vehicle through which men bond and exist in a non-sexualised way, however, there is a level of desire, and performativity to ensure that homosexual scrutiny doesn't exist within this setting. Homosociality is known to develop heteronormative discourse and hierarchies that keep hegemonically masculine men in power, while subordinate masculinities and women exist in an inferior status. Finally, through the exposure of empirical research, it can be seen that men can bond physically more openly and freely in homophobic free, and pro-gay environments without fear of homosexual negative connotations. Finally it appears that in homosocial settings, men bond through humour and micky taking, so that intimacy can be experienced without fear of homosexualisation.

### **3.7 Multidisciplinary Approach to Queer Theory**

So far this review of Queer Theory, has spoken at length about the theoretical structure of queering within an ontological framework, however; at this point, a brief examination of other literature that have taken a queer epistemological stance will be highlighted, taking into account the diverse implementation of the term Queer in research. The works that will be discussed will try and provide a

deeper framework in which to aid the analysis of queering feet/shoes/sexuality within the sporting context; this will be enabled by demonstrating the variety of 'spaces/contexts' within which a queered perspective can be used, and providing a concluding statement as to its applicability to the current research thesis.

Nylund (2007) is an interesting place to start this short adventure into queered research. His paper entitled '*Reading Harry Potter: popular Culture, Queer Theory and the Fashioning of Youth Identity*', takes a look at the role of counselling and the therapeutic connection that some clients/patients make by placing themselves with literary texts as a way of working through an identity crisis and the understanding of self. Through this process, the author identified that by using a 'queer cultural viewpoint' (Nylund, 2007, p.13-14), and the exposure of a patients' therapeutic experience, a queer reading into Harry Potter can be made, while allowing the patient to come to terms with 'his own sexual identity' (p.13). The author argues that cultural studies are taken from a variety of different fields of academia, these include anthropology, sociology, gender studies, feminism, literary criticism, history and psychoanalysis (Nylund, 2007 cites Barker, 2000; Fiske, 1987; Kellner, 1995; McRobbie, 1994; Miller, 2001); but most importantly cultural studies as with Queer Theory is interested in challenging hegemony. This paper, as previously stated, claims to take a 'queer cultural view point' (Nylund, 2007, p. 13-14); the author suggests when considering queer theory and cultural claims, it can be used as a methodological tool to analyse sources of literature e.g. Harry Potter.

Nylund (2007, p.19) presents a set of questions to aid in analysis of Queer Theory within literary texts. These are:

- How does the product reinforce or disrupt the traditional dichotomies and/or associations among them (black/white, straight/gay, masculine/feminine, male/female, good/evil?

- How does the product reinforce or disrupt the modern notion of 'essentialist' (the idea that sexuality and gender is ahistorical and fixed in biology) gender or sexual identities?
- How does the product reinforce or disrupt the heterosexuality or its presumption about the continuities, congruencies, or stability of the relationships between sex, gender, and desire?
- Can this text be read against the grain to unearth hidden queer meanings and pleasures?
- How does this product represent the project of 'othering' – giving subjectivity (voice, primary positioning) to certain characters while marginalising (silencing, stigmatising, objectifying) other characters?

It can be seen, that even though a method of 'how to do' queer theory is not stated; these question (that one should/could ask themselves), would be an aid in the initial stages of will queering the environment/space within which the literature is set. It is felt by the author of this thesis, that these could be useful markers in the initial stages of questioning the queerness of interview transcripts.

In their article *"I Can't Even Think Straight", "Queer" Theory and the Missing Sexual Revolution in Sociology*, Stein and Plummer (1996) consider the review of the post-modernist movement of post-structuralism and the review of homosexual theory analysis; they suggest that throughout the past twenty years authors have 'claimed' to have been at the pinnacle of analysis of sexuality in sociology, however, it is only until recently that the true sexual revolution of queer theory appeared. During their work on queer theory and the critique of queer methodology, Stein and Plummer (1996) suggest, that hallmarks of queer theory exist through the critical gaze of 'queering' texts and reading into common themes, which arise through these 'queer' discussions. These hallmarks include;

'(1) a conceptualisation of sexuality which sees sexual power embodied in different levels of social life, expressed discursively

and enforced through boundaries and binary divides; (2) the problematisation of sexual and gender categories, and of identities in general. Identities are always on uncertain ground, entailing displacements of identification and knowing; (3) a rejection of civil-rights strategies in favour of a politics of carnival, transgression, and parody which leads to deconstruction, decentering, revisionist readings, and an anti-assimilationist politics; (4) a willingness to interrogate areas which normally would not be seen as the terrain of sexuality, and to conduct queer “readings” of ostensibly heterosexual or non-sexualised texts’.

(Stein and Plummer, p.134)

It can be noted by the author, that these questions could and will lay the foundations in the analysis of queering this thesis. Stein and Plummer’s (1996) perspectives exist only to reinforce the epistemological stance of this thesis, but also provide a alignment through which literature and methodology support the queering of feet/ shoes/sexuality in sport. To support this abstract idea of queering feet/shoes in sport, Stein and Plummer (1996, p.135), continue by stating, ‘queer theorists interrogate aspects of social life- the family, intimate relationships- but also look at places not typically thought of as sexualised- the economy, for example’.

On a slightly difference note, and within the academic remit of film studies; Giffney (2009b) considers the role of queering film; not any type of film, but a Walt Disney Cartoon. ‘*The New Queer Cartoon: Who’s That Slug in My closet? The New Queer Cartoon*’ (Giffney, 2009b) considers the queered roles of characters within the film and the close stereotypical association these characters have to the queered/marginalised community. The author continues her venture into the queering of children’s cinema, by moving onto the critique of the film ‘Shreck’; she proposes a variety of critical queer analysis of the film;

including the role of hegemonic masculinity (the role of Shreck), the phallic strut of one of the characters (which she purports indicates that this character is led by his penis) and most uniquely the use of the 'Anal Erotics of Ass Humour' (Giffney, 2009b, p.368).

Of most importance, Giffney (2009b) discusses the theoretical engagements that one needs to consider when using Queer Theory in film. These approaches include;

'the discursive examination of the representation of sexual and gender identity categories and those who sport them across a range of films, (cites Wilton 1995; Phillips, 2006), as well as how gender and sexuality intersect with other forms of identification such as race, ethnicity, nationality, class age, religion and dis/ability'.

(Giffney, 2009b, p.366)

Giffney (2009b) continues by stating that as well as considering sexuality and the above theories of queering film, it is of significance that film studies critiques consider the role of heteronormativity in film and that by 'discussing how particular films promote, make visible, challenge and subvert- sometimes simultaneously- compulsory heterosexuality' (p.366).

In conclusion, it is felt, that once again, critical links to film study critique and the methodological approaches demonstrated above, can not only help question the data presented within this body of work, but provide a chance to look at interviews 'singly' or 'in a more broad based study' context. It is also felt by the author, that if children's film can be queered, then this thesis can only add to a body of knowledge whereby queering society is paramount.

### **3.8 Research in Sport and Queer Theory**

In a body of work such as this, it was felt that Queer Theory and its relation to the sporting context and its role in empirical research should be briefly exposed. Two empirical studies that have utilised the Queer Theoretical perspective, will be highlighted to demonstrate the 'situatedness' of this research within the Queer Theoretical sporting perspective.

Firstly, Wellard (2006) introduces a Queer Theoretical study that in some regard overlaps in essence with this research thesis. Wellard (2006) utilises a Queer Theoretical perspective to gain an insiders ethnographic perspective of a gay men tennis club. Wellard (2006, p.76) states that by utilising a Queer Theoretical perspective he is able to consider and deconstruct the importance of 'bodily performances, which dictate the level of entry participation, which in turn, highlights the dominance of heteronormativity'. In essence through undertaking this research Wellard (2006) was able to note the following deconstructed from a Queer Theoretical perspective; firstly, playing ability and bodily performances were clear indicators of successful participation, and that through performing hegemonic masculine stereotypes these homosexual men were seen as more legitimate tennis players. To this end, it was also documented that if you were unable to perform and demonstrate a level of hegemonic masculinity while engaging in tennis, you were considered to share the same level of sporting-capital as non-macho heterosexual men. This study also highlighted the process of policing/ensuring heteronormative behaviours were performed by homosexual men in the tennis club. Initially the club allowed some players to dress up as their favourite female tennis players, and entertained a level of 'campness' in performing feminised masculinities. However, the research exposed that these homosexualised behaviours, soon became frowned upon as the club became more notorious/prestigious; the club soon refused to let men 'dress-up', hence fulfilling heteronormative values and silencing the homosexual voice within this homosexual homosocial setting.



Chaudwell (2007) utilised a similar research methodology investigating '*The Complexities of Sexuality within a lesbian-identified football team in England*'; again taking a researcher insiders perspective. Here Chaudwell (2007) focuses on the construction of femme-identity and its relation to butch constructions of lesbian. She exposes this construction in femme in relation to the butch-femme equation and the opposition of butch, and in this framework, femme is often reflected upon as 'incomplete fragile and duped' (p.188). As was similarly exposed in Wellards' (2006) study, butch in lesbian football (as is hegemonic macho masculine in tennis) 'is celebrated as a viable/defender' (p.189). It is interesting that again (as was present in the previous study) clothing became a focus on sexuality identity especially in this butch-femme married. One participant refused to wear shorts, but preferred the feel of a shirt while playing football; this performative role of playing femme within this butch setting 'challenged notions of femme-ininity' and reflected the participants discourse and reality of this femme-butuh role within the sporting setting to be normative.

In conclusion, it is evident in these two research examples how Queering the sporting settling/environment, allow another level of academic discourse to deconstruct normative belief and behaviours within the homosocial setting. It is interesting that in both examples, homosexual men and lesbians step towards policing and, in essence to police heteronormative values. Even if policing doesn't occur, it becomes a level of discourse for the said community to experiment with truths and create new sporting regimes.

It should also be evident that at this stage this body of work is most suited for utilising a Queer Theoretical perspective, and that through this employment strategy, some deep insight will be given to the structure of homosocial environments in sport. Wellards' (2006) demonstrates this studies ability to work within the sporting setting and utilise men as the focus of the study. It will also be useful to understanding the complexities between homosexual and heterosexual constructions of embodiment in homosocial sporting environments.

### **3.9 Conclusions**

In conclusion, it may appear that Queer Theory has its complications in defining what is actually is (3.3) however, through deeper insight and analytical discussion (3.4) and (3.5) a realised perspective of this theory can be noted. Through gaining insight into embodied homosociality, and its relationship to a critical feminist perspective, while taking on board the significance of masculinity theory, knowledge has been gained which will support the epistemological stance of this research further (3.6). By exposing the variety of approaches that utilise a Queer Theoretical perspective (3.7), alignment to the overarching epistemology of this body of work and Queer Theory in the sporting environment can be exposed (3.8).

It is hoped that through this Chapter, direct links have been forged to the use of Queer Theory as an analytical tool for deconstruction of 'Embodied Masculinity in Homosocial Sporting Environments'. Additionally, it is evident that this Chapter has provided detailed examples that will support Queer Theory in supporting the Primary Research Questions offered in Chapter 1 of this thesis.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **4.1 Introduction**

This Chapter will cover the key methodological aspects needed to undertake the analysis of data. Firstly, insight will be given to a brief overview of the whole methodological process, that will be undertaken during this body of research (4.2). Brief perspectives will be provided to an overview of Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (reference here please Smith, Harre, and Van Langenhove, 1995)) [hereafter IPA] (4.3), giving acknowledging the epistemological underpinnings and a short historical background. Moving on, discussion will turn to the importance of the recruitment of participants, the appropriated sample size for an IPA study and the inclusion criteria for this particular body of work, in light of IPA (4.4); suitable literature will be utilised to support this discussion. This Chapter will then consider the role of the interview schedule and the semi-structured interview process, in light of qualitative IPA study (4.5). Once, the interview process was completed, consideration was be given to the recording and transcription of the digitally recorded interviews (4.6.1), and a more detailed description provided to the full analysis process (4.6.2). In light of the whole research methodological analysis process, it is important to consider the role of validity (4.7.1) in qualitative research, and the 'locating' of the researcher within that analysis process (4.7.2). As the discussion moves forward and in light of the discussion so far, a full description of a 'pilot study' is be exposed (4.8). In bringing the methodological Chapter to a close, exposure is be given to the wider IPA research picture, and the possible utilisation of IPA in other disciplines (4.9). A conclusion (4.10) brings the whole Chapter to a close, providing clarity as to the appropriateness of this researchers methodological approach.

## **4.2 Overview of Methodology/Procedures**

To begin, a brief synopsis of the overarching methodological stance will be provided to give the reader a snap shot into the essence of the methodological underpinnings of the thesis.

This thesis uses a qualitative research paradigm embedded in a post-modernist theoretical Queer conceptual framework. There are three main stages to the methodological approach encapsulated within this thesis. These include: (1) recruitment of participants', (2) interview structure and alignment to the ethos of Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) and, (3) analysis of transcribed data.

Ethical approval was granted through the University of East London's Ethics Committee (APPENDIX A); this approval enabled the recruitment of participants for this study through contacting sports teams in London that identified themselves on the internet as either homosexual and/or heterosexual sports teams. The teams were politely contacted via email (APPENDIX C), including a recruitment poster requesting (APPENDIX B) sportsmen to volunteer to take part in the study. A poster was also displayed at the University of East London, requesting participants who were involved in sport and willing to discuss masculinity/feet and shoes to also volunteer for the study. In summary, eight participants were recruited for the study, four self identified homosexual sportsmen and four self identified heterosexual sports men.

Semi-structured Interviews were implemented as the method of collecting the worldly experiences understood from the participants' perspective, and before each interview each participant had read the 'Information for Participants Sheet' (APPENDIX D) and signed a 'Consent Form' (APPENDIX E) agreeing to take part in the study. A narrative stance (Smith and Sparkes, 2008; 2009) was used during the interview process; this involved participants being asked to expand on their responses, as if they were telling a story, reflecting back on their life

experiences. This took into consideration the role of reflection; which is couched within the philosophical and epistemological underpinnings of IPA methodology (Brocki and Wearden, 2006); it was felt by the researcher that this would enhance/encourage idiographic themes from the data. The interviews were recorded using a digital recorder; these were coded to hide the identity of the participants and stored on the researchers' laptop. All eight interviews were transcribed using an external transcribing agency; the transcriber adhered to a code of ethics and signed a consent waiver regarding the data.

Analysis/interpretation of the data utilised Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) as an analytical tool. In brief, each interview was analysed in turn, adhering to the protocol suggested by Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) (this will be discussed in far greater detail in the later part of this Chapter; (4.6.2); here each interview was analysed for emergent super-ordinate themes. Once each interview had been analysed, cross-referencing between interviews proceeded whereby development of the final Super-ordinate and Subordinate themes were created. A table of final themes was then created, and at this stage, the themes will be concreted.

#### **4.3 Theoretical and Historic Background of Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis**

To begin, insight will be given to the theoretical and historical background of IPA, introducing appropriate knowledge so that the foundations of IPA can be understood. This should provide clarity during the analysis, discussion and conclusion process, enabling the researcher to locate fundamental underpinnings. It will also enable the audience to locate the researcher within this epistemological background, while giving insight into the creation of IPA.

Interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) is a relatively new research methodology. Developed by Jonathan Smith (Smith, Harre, and Van Langenhove, 1995), its foundation lay in the philosophical study of

phenomenology (Moran, 2000 as cited by Smith and Eatough, 2007), hermeneutics (Palmer, 1969 as cited by Smith and Eatough, 2007) and idiography (Smith, Harre, and Van Langenhove, 1995; Smith and Eatough, 2007; Smith, Flowers, and Larkin, 2009). It has been stated that IPA shares a 'realist ontology' (Reid, Flowers and Larkin, 2005, p.21).

Through the intertwining of philosophical disciplines the aim of IPA is to 'explore in detail how participants are making sense of their personal and social world, and the main currency for an IPA study is the meanings particular experiences, events, states hold for participants' (Smith and Osborn, 2008).

Each philosophical perspective will be briefly outlined in turn (phenomenology, hermeneutics and idiography), allowing the reader to form a clear picture as to the creation of the methodological approach.

Phenomenology was the originally developed by Edmund Husserl (1859-1938) and continued by Heidegger (1889-1976) (Cerbone, 2006). Phenomenology is the philosophical study of experience (Smith, Flowers and Larking, 2009). It has also been suggested that phenomenology is studying phenomena coinciding with that experience (Cerbone, 2006). Husserl during his period of time, focussed on the importance of 'essence' and life world, by this he considered what in peoples life world made up the construction of life and objects. A technique he used to define this process was 'free-imaginative variation' (Cerbone, 2006; Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). Larkin, Watts and Clifton (2006) state that with ontological background of phenomenology in mind, one should approach IPA with two important factors, these include, 'describing the participants lived worlds and what it is like, and the focus of participants experiences in specific events, process and relationships' (p.104).

Moving on, hermeneutics was originally conceived by Schleiermacher (1768-1843) and later on by Heidegger (1889-1976) (Schmidt, 2006). Hermeneutics is

the theory of interpretation (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). Of particular importance for an IPA study, is the significance of the hermeneutics circle (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). The hermeneutic circle is the concept that whole knowledge is understood through interpretation in the form of an interpretive circle, it is in this circle that the 'whole' and the 'part' exist (Schmidt, 2006; Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). The notion of the hermeneutic circle is of particular importance highlighting the researcher, making sense of the data making sense of themselves (Larkin, Watts and Clifton, 2006).

Finally, idiography is about the focus of an individual participants discourse in relation to the whole project. It assumes the focus on the particular rather than the whole (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). It appears that the 'idiographic' approach included in IPA has been developed as an accumulation of Smiths work over the past sixteen years (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) turn to Harre (1979) who states that in creating generalisations in data, idiography doesn't eschew from generalisations, idiography just finds a different way of establishing them. It has been said 'that the emphasis is on the particular, and hence develops generalisations more cautiously' (p.29). Therefore IPA, can turn to all the participants' discourses, or focus on the particular in exposing a real life experience.

In conclusion it can be seen that IPA is deeply embedded in the ontological/epistemological debate. Through exposing the theoretical background of phenomenology, hermeneutics and idiography it is hoped that an ever expanding valid epistemology for utilising such a methodology can be noted.

#### **4.4 Recruitment of Participants, Sample Size, Inclusion Criteria, and Philosophy**

During the process of recruiting participants for a study, a clear linear mapping process needs to occur, which involves taking into account the theoretical constructs of the methodology, this can add additional challenges to this rational

process. This section will briefly consider the role of ethics within the study; it will then review the theoretical debate of sample size within an IPA study and how this relates to this thesis. Insight will be given to the importance of inclusion criteria within an IPA study, whereby homogeneity and the philosophy of idiography are key to methodological accuracy. Finally, details will be given as to how this thesis recruited participants into the study.

As is traditional with empirical research ethical approval is required for any research that uses human participants (Parker, 2006; Silverman, 1998; Wolcott, 1995). Ethical approval was sought and approved from the University of East London's Ethics Committee; this enabled this thesis to undertake procedures to recruit participants for the study (APPENDIX A). The thesis aimed to recruit men who are involved in sport from any sporting discipline, which in addition have an opinion on masculinity, the body and footwear. The participants were also expected to disclose their sexuality prior to the interview process. The narrow inclusion criteria fell in line with the philosophy of IPA, which was essential when considering a study with an idiographic construct.

This thesis aimed to recruit between eight to ten participants; in reality however, eight participants were recruited during this process, and this included four sportsmen who identified themselves as homosexual and four sportsmen who identified themselves as heterosexual.

With relation to sample size, the theoretical considerations will now be discussed, demonstrating awareness to IPA and methodological integrity.

Sample size within an IPA study seems to be a rather contentious issue. Many research papers argue and defend their stance on the number of participants they have recruited. Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009, p.51) state most definitively that there is 'no right answer to the question of sample size'. It is commonly understood that most IPA studies recruit a small number of



participants (Smith, 2004), since this is often the norm in idiographic studies (Brocki and Wearden, 2006). It is significant to comment on Brocki and Wearden's (2006) '*Critical evaluation of the use of interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) in health psychology*', since the authors undertook a systematic literature review of 52 articles that employed IPA within its methodological approach. During the review of those 52 papers, the authors considered 'how many participants were included in these studies?' the actual amount of participants varied from study to study; however, the number ranged from one to forty-eight, however, the review did not give a definitive answer as to a suitable amount of participants for a research study. The overall literature consensus is that the number of participants should be a relatively small number (Brocki and Wearden, 2006; Larkin, Watts and Clifton, 2006; Smith and Eatough, 2007; Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009; Smith and Osborn, 2008; Smith and Osborn, 2004). To continue this discussion, Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) give clear guidelines as to what they consider to be the rules of approaching the amount of participants that should be included in a study,

'As a rough guide, we would suggest that between three and six participants can be a reasonable size for a student project using IPA...Indeed many studies by experienced IPA researchers now use numbers within this range.....Our own practice is now to treat  $n = 3$  as the default size for an undergraduate or masters IPA study...without prescribing this or even recommending it especially, we often think of a PhD as being made up of three self contained but related studies. In that case it would be possible, for example, for the first study to be a single case study, the second to offer a detailed examination of three cases, and the third to examine a larger sample of eight participants from a different location'.

(Smith, Flowers and Larking, 2009, pp, 51-52)

It can be clearly stated that a small sample size seems to be the most appropriate approach to such an IPA study, as encompassed by this thesis. Ironically it should also be stated that at the other end of the 'how many participants is an adequate number debate?' Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) and Smith and Eatough (2007) also comment that they are currently recommending that PhD students take on the challenge of using one case study to fulfil the idiographic approach to IPA studies.

Taking these debates into consideration, and the limited number of recruited participants for the study; the author felt of sound mind that in relation to IPA sample size theory and the actual number of recruitment participants, 8 would be a suitable number for an IPA study of this magnitude. Since discussing and reflecting on sample size for an IPA study, it is essential to consider the recruitment aims bound up in this IPA research. Here theoretical insight will be gained through the brief discussion of IPA, idiography and homogeneity.

This thesis' recruitment aim/inclusion criterion was to find men who were actively engaged in sport; it did not matter if they were involved in individual sports (e.g. running/weight lifting/javelin) or team sports (e.g. rugby/football/basketball). The inclusion criteria also required participants to disclose their sexuality prior to the start of the study.

The only consideration for an exclusion criteria, was the role of disability, for the simple reason this wouldn't not map clearly onto a homogenous sample, however, this would be treated on a participant-by-participant basis.

The inclusion criterion for this thesis was carefully considered, with the philosophical knowledge of IPA in mind. IPA suggests that in light of the idiographic approach to IPA ('insights produced as a result of intensive and detailed engagement with individual cases' (Willig, 2008a, p.57)), a 'fairly homogenous sample of participants are needed' (Smith, Flowers and Larkin,

2009, p.49). The researcher when using IPA needs to understand that you cannot map/relate small idiographic examples onto the whole population, but through demonstrating purposive sampling (finding a 'closely defined group by which the research question will be significant' (Smith and Eatough, 2007, p.40) and through 'attempting to understand the specific phenomena from the perspective of this particular group' (Smith and Osborn, 2004, p.231), a mapping of these understandings onto a small homogeneous group or population can be significant (Smith and Osborn, 2008). It is of interest to the note, Smith and Osborn's' (2004, p.232) commentary whereby they consider the generalisability of such data; they state that through a IPA study one should be able to say '(1) a lot about a particular participants in the study, (2) something about the broad group they represent, but (3) one would not be able to say anything about people outside of that group'.

Reflecting upon these concepts related to IPA and recruitment of homosexual and heterosexual participants, it could be stated that the recruited participants represented a small homogenous group that could of value to the group they represent (Storey, 2007).

In light of the idiographic approach to an IPA study, it is essential to state how the participants were recruited. Posters were place at the University of East London asking for volunteers to take part in the study (APPENDIX B). Simultaneously, emails were sent out to homosexual sports clubs within the London area, asking for participants; and/or the clubs to make the participants aware of the study and to contact the primary investigator if they were willing to find out more and/or wishing to take part. The email contained the same poster that was utilised at The University of East London; this was to provide equity in the persuasion of recruiting participants. Emails were sent to the following London based, homosexual sports teams; London Knights Hockey Team, London Tennis international, New Rowmantics (Rowing), The London Cruisers (Basketball), London Front Runners (Running), London Spikers (Volleyball), London Raiders

(Softball), London Artillery (Football), London Titans (Football), London Squash, London Wrestling and The London Dragons (Badminton). It was felt by the author that it might be more beneficial to target homosexual sports teams, as it was hoped that the University would provide adequate resources to access heterosexual sporting community. A final list of all the participants' recruited for this study can be found in Chapter 5 (5.1.1).

Participants, who were then interested in taking part in the study, either emailed or called the researcher to gain further information. At this time an 'Information For Participants Sheet' (APPENDIX D) was emailed to the potential participants, the researcher waited until participants had decided if they were willing to take part. If the feedback was positive and the interested parties decided to become involved in the study, a date was organised for the interview to take place at the University of East London. Once the participant arrived for the interview the 'Consent Form' was completed (APPENDIX E).

In conclusion, it is clear that evidence within this section suggests that a large sample of participants within an IPA study is not essential, and in actual fact, that too many participants could be detrimental to the level of insight gained through the analysis process. Sample size is closely linked to the epistemological notion of idiography and inclusion criteria; whereby close analysis of case based transcriptions and the awareness of the participants' homogeneity, enables deep insight into small homogenic groups. This means that the data is not generally applicable, but relevant to the homogeneous groups under analysis. It is apparent through the recruitment procedures detailed above, and the acknowledgement to fulfil the epistemological understandings of an IPA; this study have provided a sound strategy as the recruitment of the participants and the multi-layered understandings required when it come to the philosophical underpinnings of IPA, sample size, homogeneity and idiography.

#### **4.5 The Interview Schedule and the Semi-Structured Interview**

As a brief introductory paragraph, this section will provide a short insight into the epistemology of the semi-structured interview for this thesis and its alignment to an IPA methodological approach, and the impact that this has on the interview schedule for such a qualitative methodology. An opening statement will give insight into the overall structure of this thesis' semi-structured interview methodology, followed by the reasoning's and literature for those choices made.

This thesis decided to use semi-structured interviews to collect data from the participants. Eight interviews were carried out in total; these participants included four homosexual sportsmen and four heterosexual sportsmen. A semi-structured interview schedule was formulated prior to the interviews taking place (APPENDIX F); the University of East London's Ethics Committee requested examples of the interview schedule during the process of Ethical Approval for the study. During ethical approval, it was stated by the researcher that the published schedule was really only guideline and there is no guarantee as to what participants may discuss during their interview. A set of opened questions were developed, these questions enabled the participants to go on a self-reflective journey in order to encourage relevant data for analysis. The data was collected within the researcher's office at the University of East London.

The author undertaking this thesis would like to acknowledge the fact that it became difficult to separate the processes of developing the interview schedule and the philosophical underpinnings of choosing semi-structured interviews as a methodology. It is clear that these choices are clearly aligned to this thesis, but trying to discuss these in turn as a methodology, it soon became apparent there was a meshing between semi-structured interviews and the creation of an interview schedule. Therefore some overlap will occur between the discussion of semi-structured interviews and the development of the interview schedule.

The interview schedule (or agenda) is the set of questions developed for the semi-structured interview. Willig (2008a) and Silverman (1998) suggest that the agenda for a semi-structured interview should contain some key open-ended questions that align with the aims of the project being undertaken. Smith, flowers and Larking (2009) understand that a key reason for developing an interview schedule prior to the event, it to have a planned idea of how the interview might go; so that a 'comfortable' interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee can occur. Smith and Eatough (2007) develop the notion of prior planning arguing that, planning before the interviews can make the researcher consider areas of difficulty that might occur during the interview process; for instance if the subject matter might be controversial with the participants, prior planning can help the researcher consider how they may work around these sensitive issues. Smith and Osborn (2004) suggest that preparing a list of prompts can help the interviewer overcome moments of difficulty such as this. It should also be noted, that of great importance is the interaction between the interviewer and the interviewee; it is felt that through detailed planning of the interview schedule, the interviewer can really listen and interact with the participant, demonstrating interest and understanding of the participant's responses (Smith and Osborn, 2008; Smith, Harre and Langenhove, 1995; Willig, 2001; 2008a, 2008b), and can react and respond accordingly to develop and move the interview forward.

During the development of the interview schedule a challenge was met by the researcher; it was felt that there might be difficulties in getting participants to a point, whereby they would be able to reflect and understand the meanings/experiences of their bodies and shoes without taking these participants on a life journey. Therefore, the researcher decided to use questions framed in narrative context as highlighted by Sparkes (2002); with participants reflecting on past experiences and giving stories to highlight their experiential understanding. In brief, this does not mean that this thesis will analyse the data using a narrative methodology, however, it does fall in line with the constructs of creating narrative

data. This mode of reflective thinking from the participants' perspective, and their engagement with their past experiences, align tightly with the epistemologies understood by the methodology of IPA and the construction of semi-structured interviews. Considering the reflexive approach this gives the interview schedule of the study, a true hermeneutic circle (Husserl, 1913; Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009) which can be embraced/analysed by both interviewer and interviewee alike.

'The Semi-Structured Interview' within IPA literature, appears to be the gold standard approach to collecting data (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009; Smith and Osborn, 2008). It should also be noted that semi-structured interviews are not only used in IPA studies but are also imperative to a vast amount of other qualitative research methodologies; these include, discourse analysis and grounded theory to name but two (Willig, 2001).

It is suggested by Smith and Osborn (2008) that one of the reasons for using semi-structured interviews for an IPA study, includes the fact, that a methodological technique is needed that provides participants with the flexibility to express their experiences in their own words, and not be constrained by the schedule set up by the interviewer. Smith and Osborn (2008) continue by stating 'IPA researchers usually engage in semi-structured interviews with participants where the researcher has a set of questions to ask but these are used very flexibly in the interview' (p.232). Biggerstaff and Thompson (2008) agree with this statement, suggesting that the interview schedule should be very loosely drawn up for the semi-structured interview, however, they suggest that themes should be drawn up rather than questions, this again provides a means through which the participants voice and experiences can be heard without being limited by the researchers own research intentions. Smith and Eatough (2007) align with this mode of thinking and add to the concept of semi-structured interviews and IPA, they argue that as a researcher, you want an interview schedule that guides participants through their experiences, rather than a schedule dictating the

direction of the interview; this allows the researcher/interviewer to probe more deeply into areas that arise throughout the interview that were unexpected from the interview schedule. This unexpected data that can arise from the interview enables the participant to take more control over the direction and focus of the interview; it has been suggested that this movement away from the semi-structuredness of the interview methodology, can move the data into an area of enlightenment for the whole thesis, which could eventually highlight areas that previously might not have been considered relevant to the overarching literature/themes/background of the thesis (Smith and Osborn, 2004). Smith and Eatough (2007) add to this debate regarding the loss of control of the researcher over the interview pace/schedule by commenting that, even though there is a loss of control by the researcher, the participant has become as 'active agent' in shaping their interview agenda. As the agenda changes and the interviewee gains more control, Smith and Eatough (2007, p.42) suggest that the 'participant can be seen as the experiential expert and should therefore be allowed to maximise their opportunity to tell his/her own story'.

The author suggests that this challenge between losing control of the interviewee and the interview schedule (which could also be seen as a limitation of IPA methodology, or as Biggerstaff and Thompson (2008, p.217) call it 'letting the interviewee take the lead') also aligns with the hermeneutic approach understood in the histo-philosophical underpinnings of IPA methodology. It is important to remember that both the interviewee and the interviewer are both interpreting and understanding each other worlds as the interview transpires. This double hermeneutic circle (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009) is made available through the process of semi-structured interviewing and the narrative interview schedule. The double hermeneutic approach and reflexive practice will be discussed in greater detail later in this Chapter.

In conclusion, it can be seen that detailed planning went into considering the structure of the interview schedule; through this acknowledgement of the



theoretical background to interview schedule development, the researcher was able to enter the interview environment planned for any eventuality that may have occurred. Alignment to IPA and the choice of semi-structured interviews as a means of gathering data; ensured that participants reflected back on their experiences and were empowered to guide the interview schedule if necessary, through this mode of collecting data.

Finally, through in depth detailed planning, including the alignment of IPA philosophy, semi-structured interviews with a narrative questioning style will allow insight into the development of the interview schedule. Demonstrating the rigour into the structured process of how this thesis will collect data.

## **4.6 Analysis of Data**

Consideration will now turn to two aspects of the analysis process. Firstly, insight will be given to the 'Recording/Transcription of the Data' (4.6.1), exposing some of the theoretical concepts supporting this method of saving data. Secondly, detailed insight will be given to the procedural aspects of the 'Analysis the Data' (4.6.2); an in depth discussion will expose the essential theoretical concepts and the procedural steps needed in analysing the data, to produce the final pivotal themes.

### **4.6.1 Recording/Transcription of the Data**

Here the mode by which the data was collected and transcribed will be introduced. A brief discussion reflecting on how to collect data in an IPA study will lay the foundations as to the final decisions made methodologically for this thesis. The pros and cons of using recording equipment within an IPA study will be made transparent, while taking into account the ethical issues of storage of data. The transcription process will be analysed, taking into account the key features that need to be included within an IPA transcription and the role of the researcher in this process. A brief commentary will be given as to the use of external

transcription services, which can aid the research journey of an IPA in depth thesis.

Firstly, it is important to consider the mode by which the data will be collected and stored. An audio-recording of the interview is the most common practice in qualitative research (Willig, 2001). Since IPA works with texts generated from interviews that have been transcribed (Willig, 2008a), the data will be recorded on a digital recorder, as a verbatim record of the data is required for the transcription process (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). Smith and Osborne (2008, p.64) support this argument of using a digital recorder within an IPA study stating that they feel 'it is not possible to do the form of interviewing required for IPA without tape recording'. Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) continue to state that if an interview is recorded, consent of the participant is required; as previously discussed consent has been agreed with the University of East London's Ethics Committee. (An example of the 'Consent Form' can be noted as APPENDIX E).

There are definite pros and cons as to the benefits of audio-recording interviews; these include the facts that the interviewer cannot write down all the key points of interest during the interview process (Smith and Osborn, 2004), also there is the possibility that the participant might be self-conscious about being recorded which might affect the quality of the data (Willig, 2001). At the same time if the interviewer is writing and asking questions, it can affect the quality of the interview, since the communication focus (eye contact, gesturing) might not be on the participant (Willig, 2001). Nonetheless, it is without question that recording an interview provides the best methodological approach, for storage, quality of revisiting the audio interview and the ability to transcribe the data into text.

For ethical assurance, it is important to state that all the data will be protected under the Data Protection Act (1998) this includes the anonymity of the interviewees and the coding of any names of people discussed throughout the

interviews. At the same time the digital audio recordings and the transcribed interviews will be stored on the primary researcher's laptop. The primary researcher will be the only person to have access to this data.

Therefore to summarize, the interviews were be recorded using a digital recording device, stored on the researchers computer and are kept confidentially under the Data Protection Act (1998).

After the interview process, it is common practice to transcribe the recorded interview. A brief discussion regarding the theoretical process of transcription, positioning of the researcher and IPA will now be discussed.

The 'normal' approach to transcribing data for an IPA study is to include everything that is said, (Smith and Osborn, 2008), however, what differentiates IPA from other analytical methodologies, such as conversation analysis (CA), is that it is not important to worry about all the utterances and pauses that are considered important in CA, these are called the 'prosodic' aspects of an interview (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009, p. 74). The argumentation, for the redirection of detail away from the prosodic features of an interview, include the notion that IPA is focussed on the semantic meaning of the interview, this suggests that the 'words' that are said, are the focus for analysis (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). Smith and Osborn (2008, p65), also state that at the semantic level 'one needs to see all the words spoken including false starts; significant pauses, laughs and other features'; Biggerstaff and Thompson (2008, p.217) add to this list of features to consider during the transcription process stating that 'mis-hearings, apparent mistakes, and even speech dynamics' are important to focus on during this process.

The next question we need to ask ourselves is, who is going to transcribe the interviews into data for analysis? In this instance it was felt that the primary researcher would re-live the transcription process after the return of the data from

the external agency, enforcing an immediate embedding of the researcher into the data. The primary researcher would be reminiscent and reflective of the interview experience, while simultaneously starting the analysis process through reproducing the discourse in print, and reliving the experience. The author acknowledges the fact that the transcription process is a lengthy process; Smith and Osborn (2008) state that a one hour interview can take anywhere between five and eight hours.

#### **4.6.2 Data Analysis**

Here, consideration will be given to the analysis process within an IPA study. Acknowledgement will be given to the theoretical stances of IPA embedded within this realist stance, while also incorporating a strategic approach to formulating super-ordinate and sub-ordinate themes that will arise and be used within the discussion.

As an opening statement it should be noted that IPA is a new and evolving area of qualitative analysis; this directly results in the fact that sources used to underpin the process of IPA will be limited and at times repetitive. This doesn't go without saying that the IPA community makes great efforts to support and take insight into researchers that are developing the IPA epistemology.

Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) make it very clear that their approach to tackling an IPA study is not embedded within 'a single prescribed method' (p.79), but can be adapted by different researchers to fulfil their research aims (Eatough and Smith, 2006a; Shaw, 2001; Smith and Eatough, 2007; Storey, 2007). This flexibility of IPA is evident through the IPA discussion forums (<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ipanalysis/>) these discussions highlight the fact that IPA is an adaptive methodology that is constantly in a state of change/enhancement. This more significantly demonstrates that further research is needed within the field of IPA as to add to the slow growth of knowledge that currently exists. Nonetheless, with all this in mind a prescribed approach will

be discussed as developed by Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) as to demonstrate the key essential processes needed to undertake the analysis of the qualitative data, and where appropriate additional literature will be used to underpin this methodological process. It is also worth noting that within existing IPA literature, there are contradictory statements as to the suggested stages of analysis. In the review to follow, key consideration will be given to the most recent literature (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009), but, where possible, additional literature will be interwoven into their suggested stages of analysis.

In brief, Smith Flowers and Larking (2009) highlight that there are 6 main stages to analysis within an IPA multiply case study. These stages include; Stage 1) Reading and re-reading; Stage 2) Initial noting; Stage 3) Developing emergent themes; Stage 4) Searching for connections across emergent themes; Stage 5) Moving onto the next case and, Stage 6) Looking for patterns across cases. Each of the stages listed above will now be exposed in more detail, enlisting the key essential methods of undertaking analysis as guided by Smith, Flowers and Larking (2009).

Smith, flowers and Larkin (2009), suggest that transcripts should be transferred onto a document that allows note taking and theme development to be created (See APPENDIX G for an example of this suggested layout). This layout is presented with three main headings, these include, Initial Themes (placed on the left column), Original Transcript (placed in the middle column), and Exploratory Comments (placed in the right column).

### **Stage 1: Reading and Re-reading**

Reading and re-reading the transcript to get the general feel of the interview seems to be the consensus within the IPA community (Willig, 2008a; Willig, 2008b; Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). This reading and re-reading will enable the researcher to become immersed within the data; this immersion into the participants' world would be enhanced, if while re-reading the data, the

researcher listened to the interview at the same time (Biggerstaff and Thompson, 2008). During this initial stage of analysis, Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) focus the researcher to consider the participant and their experiences. It is also recommended/suggested that loose ideas, notes, feelings, emotions be noted on the interview analysis transcript (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009; Biggerstaff and Thompson, 2008). Smith and Eatough (2007, p.45), summarise this stage by stating 'several close and detailed readings of the data' are needed 'to obtain a holistic perspective so that future interpretations remained grounded within the participants accounts'.

### **Stage 2: Initial Noting**

Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) consider this stage of analysis to be the lengthiest and most time consuming, with different levels of analysis to take into consideration. Smith Flowers and Larkin (2009, p.83) state that this step 'examines semantic content and language use of a very exploratory level'. Willig (2008b, p.693) notes that this stage of analysis should be focussed on 'phrases or words that are the focus of the phenomena'. The researcher should be aware that reading and re-reading the cases, can throw up new ideas and potential new insights into the reading of the transcripts (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009; Smith and Osborn, 2008); this focused reading can be compared to a free textual analysis (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009; Biggerstaff and Thompson, 2008; Smith and Osborn, 2008). Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) and Tomura (2009) suggest that these initial comments should be placed on the Exploratory Comments column. However, this is simply an initial level of reading these transcripts and as previously stated there are additional levels to take into consideration, the process of analysis within this stage will become more complex and abstract as the researcher becomes entrenched within the data; this will be emphasised shortly.

Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009), present three sub-factors to consider during Stage 2 of the analysis, these include 'Descriptive comments', 'Linguistic

comments' and 'Conceptual comments'. It is interesting to note that Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) are the only academics to suggest these sub-factors for consideration; even though these authors highlight these additional perspectives to contemplate during the analysis process, they are repetitive in their claims that these suggested stages of analysis are not prescriptive and are presented as 'useful analytic tool which the researcher may wish to employ' (p.84).

Each of these additional sub-factors (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009) will now be exposed briefly in turn, demonstrating how these could be used during Stage 2 of the analysis process.

'Descriptive comments' relate to the recording of 'key words, phrases and/or explanations' (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009, p.84), which relate to experiences that matter to the participant in their 'life world'. Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) acknowledge that these 'life world' experiences are understood and should be noted through 'descriptions, sound bites, acronyms, idiosyncratic features of speech, and emotional responses' (p.84) raised by the participant and interviewer alike. It is understood that at this level of interpretation, the interpreter should take the analysis at face value and not delve too deeply into a more sophisticated/psychological interpretation/analysis.

'Linguistic comments' during the analysis process generally refer to the use of language (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009); at this point of analysis the researcher should focus on 'pronoun use, pauses, laughter, functional aspects of language, repetition, tone and degree of fluency' (p.88). The authors continue to discuss the fact that during analysis of linguistic commentary, the use of metaphor is a powerful tool which links descriptive notes to conceptual notes within the researcher's analysis process.

The consideration of 'Conceptual comments' or 'Conceptual coding' (as it is also referred to in some literature) is the most complex and time consuming during this stage of the analysis (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) highlight that while considering conceptual comments, the analysis will take a more interrogative form; whereby poignant experiences, words or ideas might provoke the researcher to ask themselves deeper questions as to their underlying meaning. This theoretical interrogation of the participants' experience may become abstract or obtuse to the researcher, until, like a jigsaw the abstract ideas or theoretical understandings of the participants life world, becomes more logical or coherent within the researchers own understanding, of that life world. Smith, Flowers and Larkin, (2009, p.88) develop this idea by stating 'Conceptual annotating will usually involve a shift in focus towards the participants overarching understanding of the matters that they are discussing'. The role of reflexivity is integral to the researcher during this stage of the analysis, integrating key philosophical concepts from phenomenology and hermeneutic theory; the researcher should be able to consider how the participant engages their body (self), in communicating their life experiences through their idiographic case, while at the same time, the researcher should relate their fore-understandings and fore-conceptions with the inter-subjectivity experienced/lived (time lapsed) by the participant (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). As previously stated this whole process is time consuming and takes a vast amount of awareness and commitment from the researcher to engage with the process fully and reflexively; however, a depth of insight at this idiographic level should produce extensive themes and idea synthesis.

### **Stage 3: Developing Emergent Themes**

It should be noted that as the analysis moves through each stage, emersion of the researcher into the data should become deeper (Smith and Eatough, 2007; Eatough and Smith, 2006a), allowing the embedded and lived experiences of the participants to become critically highlighted to the researcher.



Once at this stage of the analysis, Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) and Willig (2008b) guide the researcher to review their initial notes and create themes. Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) are not alone in their recommendations for theme creation at this point of analysis; other authors include Smith and Osborn (2008), Willig (2008a), Willig (2008b). Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009), recognise at that this stage of analysis the researcher needs to look for connections, relationships, interrelationships, similarities and differences, patterns and repetitions presented in the exploratory notes taken. This part of the analysis involves dissecting the transcripts from the whole and reviewing the interview at a local level (idiographic), this means looking at snap shots of data and creating themes for them. Of significance, Biggerstaff and Thompson (2008) cite Husserl (1999) and refer to the process of 'bracketing'; Biggerstaff and Thompson continue to state that bracketing 'involves the suspense of critical judgement and a temporary refusal of critical engagement, which would bring in the researcher's own assumptions and experience'. There are controversial discussions regarding 'bracketing', since IPA is known to involve the researcher throughout, suspension of the researcher's thoughts at this stage could have a negative impact on the data. It is significant to be aware of this type of analytical approach, however, this will not be used in the analysis of this data in this instance. It is of importance that through the analysis process, even though the researcher is a significant analytical tool, the 'connections' and true meanings of the participant's words should not be lost through the interpretation process (Eatough and Smith, 2006a; 2006b).

As theme generation continues, it is noted that the researcher may become more abstract in their theme generation, which will involve the integration of psychological meaning (concepts and abstractions (Smith and Eatough, 2007)) to the themes that are created (Biggerstaff and Thompson, 2008; Smith and Osborn, 2008; Willig, 2008). Once the researcher is able to transform and thematise the data to a 'higher level of conceptualisation' (Tomura, 2009), this stage of analysis is almost complete. Once the researcher has decided on the

titles for the themes generated from the data analysis, these should be recorded in the initial themes column on the working analysis transcript document. Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009), conclude this stage by suggesting that these themes should represent the synergic approach between the participants' life experiences and the role of the researcher in the interpretation process. These final themes should represent that overarching essence and feel of the whole interview transcript that has been analysed, and it is the responsibility of the researcher to be aware that this is the case as the interpretive tool.

#### **Stage 4: Searching for Connections Across Emergent Themes**

Willig (2008) states during this stage of the analysis, structure is imperative, and as will be seen, the analysis becomes far more structured and formulaic within which the role of the researcher has to undertake.

Stage 4 of the analysis process, appears to have 2 main stages contained within this part of the analysis activity. Firstly, there is the clustering process and secondly there is the generation of superordinate theme titles and their hierarchical relationship with the clustered themes below them. These two processes will now be discussed in detail, however, it will become evident to the reader, that these stages overlap and contain additional analysis process, within the processes.

To begin, the researcher should have a set of chronological themes that run throughout the analysed case from start to finish. Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) identify that the researcher must undertake the complex process of 'forging connections' (Smith and Osborn, 2004), grouping or plotting the themes together, to produce a list of super-ordinate themes; this process is called 'clustering' (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009; Smith and Osborn, 2004) or coding (Reid, Flowers and Larkin, 2005). It can be stated however, that 'clustering' seems to be word of choice within the majority of IPA literature.

Strategically, there are different ways in which one can approach the process of theme integration and the production of clusters, however, initially it should be clear to the researcher that during the clustering process, themes will be taken out of their original chronological order and placed in a new thematic order rather than a chronological one (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009).

Firstly, during the clustering process, it is suggested that there are two basic approaches; eyeballing (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009) and/or the large space method (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009)/carpeting (Meaden, 2011). Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) suggest that there are six complex approaches to clustering, including, abstraction, subsumption, polarisation, contextualisation, numeration and function. These will each now be briefly discussed in turn.

The first of the basic methods of clustering is 'Eyeballing' (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009), this simply involves the process of looking over the themes that you have commented up and making links between them, and making better sense of them. Smith and Osborn (2008) guide the researcher to imagine that the themes are like magnets and that like themes should be drawn to each other.

The second of the basic methods is the 'large space method' (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009) or 'carpeting' (Meaden, 2011) this simply involves the researcher typing, printing and cutting themes out, so they each sit individually on a piece of paper. The researcher then takes a large area or carpeted space and places all the themes down in that area and starts organising the individual paper themes into thematic groups or clusters. The benefit of this method simply allows the researcher to play around with the themes (data) and have a visual representation of how the clusters are formed. These can be adjusted and moved until the researcher is satisfied with the clusters created. The IPA community (<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/ipanalysis/>), during their on-line chat forum discussions, highlight that this is a popular and well trialled approach to clustering.

The next six, more complex approaches to cluster generation is tagged by Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009). Firstly, 'abstraction' is the process of identifying patterns amongst the themes and searching for a superordinate theme, during pattern recognition, the researcher should look for 'like for like themes and developing a new name for the cluster' (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009, p.96). Secondly, 'subsumption' is similar to 'abstraction' however, Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) suggest that the researcher find a predominant superordinate theme and allow the subordinate cluster to follow.

Thirdly, Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) suggest the process of 'polarisation' whereby the researcher considers differences in the themes rather than the similarities, and through this process a 'device for higher level data organisation' can be implemented (p.97).

Next, Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) consider the role of 'contextualisation'; here the researcher is recommended to consider the 'contextual or narrative' elements of the analysis, while focusing on the 'temporal, cultural and narrative themes in a proactive manner' (p.98). Through drawing out and clustering themes in this manner the researcher is producing clusters that align with the epistemology of IPA, taking into consideration the role of life experiences and the way in which the participant understands the structuring of their living world.

The fifth strategy of clustering is entitled 'numeration' (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009) and simply put, the researcher simply needs to cluster themes in relation to the frequency in which they occur.

The final method of cluster formation considers the role of 'function' (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). Here, the researcher takes more abstract view of the themes generated and clusters them in relation to a deeper or functional meaning of the theme; this involves the researcher to question the data more

psychologically and focus on the language used within the theme and the generated meanings of those themes.

As previously stated, the in-depth and interwoven approach to cluster generation can be a complex process; please remember that we have simply completed the first phase of cluster generation and the researcher must now move onto stage two.

Once all the themes are plotted together, a categorical title is given to each of the thematic groups (Tomura, 2009), these are known as master themes (Smith and Osborn, 2004) or super-ordinate themes (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009); these should demonstrate a 'hierarchical relationship' (Biggerstaff and Thompson, 2008, p.218) between the super-ordinate theme title, and the subordinate clusters beneath them (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). Finally, a table of master themes are plotted; these should be tabulated with examples, including page number and quotes from the transcript, to elaborate on the given thematic titles (Smith and Osborn, 2004; Tomura, 2009; Willig, 2008).

This final stage in producing a table demonstrates the triangulation and the iterative process of moving back and forward between analysis, interpretation and reflection; this transparent process should allow a fellow researcher to trace the journey from interview, analysis through to final theme production (Eatough and Smith, 2006a).

A final point to note, not all themes generated in the analysis will make its way into a cluster. It might be evident that the themes was only generated once, and did not have any relevance to the overarching narrative of the data. Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) urge the researcher not to force themes into clusters if they simply cannot be embraced by the data.

### **Stage 5: Moving onto the Next Case**

The fifth stage of analysis is integral to a multiple case methodology. The researcher now repeats stages one to four of analysis on the next case, and once those superordinate themes and clusters are generated, the researcher moves on the next case, until all cases have been analysed (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009; Willig, 2008a; Willig, 2008b).

### **Stage 6: Looking for Patterns across Cases**

This final stage of IPA analysis is to look for patterns, inconsistencies, and consistencies of themes across cases. Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009, p.101) suggest asking the following questions, 'what connections are there across cases? How does a theme in one case help illuminate a different case? Which themes were the most potent? At this stage, the process of combing for overall clusters and new superordinate themes might suggest that the clusters will change and the superordinate titles for those also. Completed superordinate themes that span all the transcribed cases should be tabulated, (similarly as in stage four of the analysis process); a final list of superordinate themes and their subordinate clusters should be documented, with all the relevant quotes, page, numbers and insights recorded. As this stage the analysis process is complete, however, it is suggested that the analysis and the thematic interpretation of the data is only completed once the words are 'fixed' in the completed thesis (Smith and Osborn, 2004; 2008).

In conclusion, the interpretive phenomenological analysis process is a complex and multi-dimensional process, which has six suggested stages (Smith, Flowers and Larkin, 2009). It is evident that the researcher plays an integral iterative role in the analysis process, from reading the initial transcript, forming preliminary ideas about the data, through to the creation of clusters and superordinate theme generation. The analysis of IPA data, is markedly individual to the researcher and in the literature is often only discussed briefly or refers to the work completed by Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009), Willig (2008a; 2008b). What is also clear within

the IPA community, taking a reflective approach researchers undertaking IPA research studies, are free to develop, integrate and create new strategies to enhance the scope of analytical practices that a such a new methodological stance can envelope.

#### **4.7 Introduction to Validity/Reflexivity**

In the current climate, qualitative researchers are encouraged to find models in which to validate and legitimatise their research, especially within the qualitative paradigm. Some authors comment on the fact that using 'quality' ensuring criteria paradigms, simply maps qualitative research methodology onto a quantitative one (Yarley, 2008); therefore amendments are needed to the criteria.

Taking this dilemma into account, brief in sight will be given to the validity of an IPA study, as well as considering the role of reflexivity (which is evidently present throughout this thesis). Each of these concepts will briefly be discussed (validity and reflexivity), however, discussion of reflexivity will occur within one of the validating criteria, simply because reflexivity is a mode by which one engages with and assesses the validity of qualitative research, therefore, at times these phenomenon are difficult to separate. It is hoped wherever possible, consideration will be given to the 'couching' of these concepts within this body of work.

##### **4.7.1 Validity**

Willig (2001) contemplates the importance of using criteria that reflects the 'relationship between epistemology and evaluation' (p.142). It is essential to take into account this relationship, so that the evaluation criteria are 'compatible with the epistemological framework of the research that is being evaluated' (Willig, 2001, p.142). Yardly (2000), with the support of Angen (2000) notes that these principles should 'open-ended and flexible' and guide the researcher to take stock of these essential principles of qualitative analysis.

Willig (2001) cites Henwood and Pidgeon's (1992) work, which accepts 'creativity' in the research analysis/validifying process, but also acknowledges 'idiosyncrasy and rigour' simultaneously. The analysis criteria which Henwood and Pidgeon (1992) as cited by Willig (2001, p.142) work by, include 1) The importance of fit; 2) Integration of Theory; 3) Reflexivity; 4) Documentation; 5) Theoretical sampling and negative case analysis; 6) Sensitivity to negotiated realities and 7) Transferability. In essence, these criterion are concerned with making sure that the data is suited to the results produced, the alignment of theory into the overarching epistemological stance and producing/integrating awareness of the researcher involvement within the study i.e. reflexivity.

Moving on from these criterion, it is felt that using criteria that are more aligned with IPA are essential within this study, providing coherence, logic and 'tightness' to the essence of this body of work. Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) refer to the Yardley's (2000) paper entitled '*Dilemmas in Qualitative Health Research*', whereby another set of criteria are used for validating qualitative research, especially IPA. Smith, Flowers, and Larkin (2009, p.180) consider these criteria to be 'broad ranging and offer a variety of ways for assessing quality' while more sophisticatedly, 'this criteria can be applied irrespective of theoretical orientation' of the study. Yardley's Criteria (2008) include Sensitivity to Context; Commitment and Rigour; Coherence and Transparency and finally, Impact and Importance. Each of these criteria will now be briefly discussed, with reference to their alignment to this study.

**Sensitivity to Context**, refers to the use of theory and empirical literature, socio-cultural setting of the work, and the participants perspective (Yardley, 2008). It is evident to say, through reading Chapters 2 and 3 the use of theory and literature are deeply entrenched within the epistemological and ontological stance of this body of work. It is evident that through grounding the participants within a socio-cultural-historical perspective of sport, the participant's data will have a chance to



live through, and in conjunction with the empirical literature; defining a participant centred perspective of the data.

**Commitment and Rigour** as criteria refers to the 'data collection process, the depth and breadth of analysis, the methodological competence/skill and the in-depth engagement with the topic' (Yardley, 2008, p.245). It is felt that if you were to use these criteria to assess 'commitment and rigour' from a qualitative analytical perspective, this thesis has taken all the perspectives into consideration. As noted within this Methodology Chapter, one can reflect on the processes of engaging with an in depth IPA study and the procedures needed to carry this out within a hermeneutic, phenomenological and idiographic epistemology, it is felt that this Chapter legitimises and validates these criteria.

**Transparency and Coherence** refers to clarity and power of your argument, the fit between theory and method, the transparent methods and data presentation, and **reflexivity** (Yardley, 2008, p.245) At this stage some of these factors are difficult to take into consideration, for instance to consider the transparency of the methods and data presentation, one would need to reflect on this Chapter and the following and make an assumption as to whether this alignment has been fulfilled. Reflecting on the use of 'fit between theory and method', it is clear to recommend that this Chapter has embraced the philosophy of IPA within its epistemology embracing the methods undertaken. Reflexivity, refers to the central role of the researcher engaging with the research process, while take into consideration themselves as well as the participants involved. Reflexivity and its role within this study will be discussed in greater detail later in this Chapter, giving examples of how this process was engaged with.

**Impact and Importance** refers to the practical applied nature of the research while reflecting on the socio-cultural and theoretical understandings of the concluding statements. What one is interested in here, is trying to validate if the research has any impact on the wider community, if that be, theoretically or

practically. These concluding statements, would be reflected upon during the concluding statements within the final Chapter, however, one hopes that when embarking on such a large body of work, that some impact on the wider philosophical and/or culturally relevant community will be impacted.

#### **4.7.2 Reflexivity**

It has been said that reflexivity is one of the most 'distinctive feature of qualitative research' (Tindall, 1994, p.149); Tindall (1994) continues by stating that within this perspective of research methodology the 'researcher and the researched are seen as collaborators in the construction of knowledge' (p.149).

In this respect it is essential for the researcher to position him/herself within the data, so that there is clarity/transparency of their actions/views/perspectives. Tindall (1994) names this 'Personal Reflexivity', which in essence take into consideration the acknowledgement of the researchers personal interests and values, which again 'reveals' (p.150) your involvement within the research. Hunt (2010) discusses the fact that the 'situatedness' of the researcher may impact on the 'political, cultural and social location my influence research decisions, data collection and interpretation of data' (p.70).

It is clear to say that the researcher needs to be ever present within a body of work, whereby the epistemological underpinnings are grounded in hermeneutics and phenomenology. It is fair to say that the researcher cannot hide within a process, whereby these philosophies involve the 'light' or 'gaze' being shone on the researcher.

Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) acknowledge the importance between philosophy and epistemology, whereby the discussion of the 'double hermeneutic circle' is present. Here, in light of reflexivity, the role of the researcher is to make sense of the participant making sense of the subject matter at hand, while simultaneously, reflecting insight onto him/herself. In addition and with respect, to

this 'double hermeneutic circle', Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) remind researchers to take into account the role of 'dynamics of preconception'; this summons concepts from hermeneutic theory, which consider the role of the 'part' and the 'whole'. This means in reflexive IPA research terms, (Smith Flowers and Larkin, 2009) the 'whole' is the researchers' on-going bibliography and the 'part' is the encounter with the participant. In short, what we are acknowledging here is the researcher's awareness of embedding reflexivity, into the key philosophical epistemologies of IPA; which in turn supports true qualitative research validity.

As well as 'being' ever present within the research, it is important to consider other strategies, which embrace the reflexive centre of qualitative research. Parker (1994) refer to the use of keeping diaries whereby researchers can record and reflect upon 'initial purpose or intentions; procedural notes; decisions made; rationales; feelings, such as confusions, anxieties, interpretations' as well as the role of using reflective diaries with run along side alongside the interpretation of interview transcripts, and conceptual notes that might have been made. The role of the reflexive/reflective diaries enables the researcher to glance back during the analysis process, and consider the way in which these interpretations have shaped their views and integration into the data. It can be stated that the researcher embraced the role of the reflective diaries throughout the research process, particularly during the analysis phase of the research.

I am going to change to the first person here, as I move on and discuss the following point. I decided that the embrace the notion of centrality experienced by the researcher going through the thesis writing process. To aid reflexivity and to be open about my role within the research process, I decided to use stories to open the thesis, so that the reader will gain insight into my socio-cultural background and how I was embedded within research. I felt that articulating my positioning through the research process would give a true nod to my integration of reflexivity and allow the reader to understand my research journey, while simultaneously aiding validity to this body of work.

In conclusion, it can be noted that attention to validity and reflexivity are essential components of any rigorous qualitative research project. It is clear that through following Yardley's (2008; 2000) criteria for validating quality, that this project has key integrated components which should/could be regarded as a quality body of work. Of most importance is the role of reflexivity; I feel that it is essential to be honest and transparent about the role of the researcher throughout any qualitative research project. It is hoped that I have made it clear that I am present, I am part of the part of the research and I am an integral part of the analysis process.

#### **4.8 Pilot Study**

In an effort to demonstrate that IPA was a suitable approach for this nature of research, a pilot study was completed prior to the commencement of this major body of work. A brief discussion of the pilot study will now be discussed, giving insight into the methodological process that was undertaken, the themes that were generated and the discussion of the data. Through highlighting the appropriateness of the methodology, and the type of data being handled and analysed, an honest defence of the undertaken methodological approach should be demonstrated.

To imitate the main study, recruitment of the participants were selected from a pre-identified London football team, who defined themselves as heterosexual and had insight and a willingness to be involved in a study that considered 'masculinity/shoe/sport/feet. These participants 'fitted' the traditional criteria for undertaking an IPA study, mapping the selection of five volunteering participants from a small homogenous group i.e. heterosexual, involved in football and had opinions on feet and shoes and sport.

Ethical approval was sort and approved form the University of East London, Health and Bioscience Department. During ethical approval, an interview protocol

was created and approved, with a set of semi-structured interview questions that were utilised for all of the interviews that took place.

The five participants were invited to the University of East London to partake in an individual semi-structured interview; the participants were notified that each interview would last approximately 1 hour. Each participant was given an 'Information for Participants' sheet to read, and a 'Consent Form' to sign; these were completed before each interview commenced.

It should be noted that the pilot study lead to the development of the semi-structured interview schedule that informed the format of questions that was used for the main thesis study. Each interview was recorded digitally and transcribed verbatim; the participants were coded by name to conceal their identity in accordance with Data Protection Act (1998).

The data was analysed using an IPA methodology; the stages followed were those defined by Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009). In brief this included 1) reading and re-read the text, getting a sense of the interview; 2) initial note taking, writing your initial thoughts and feeling down on the transcript; 3) developing emergent themes, here the initial notes are developed to create themes; 4) searching for connections across emergent themes, then the themes are clustered to form super-ordinate themes, with the corresponding sub-ordinate themes, (this is a complex and detailed process as highlighted in point (4.6.2)); 5) moving onto next case (stages 1-4 are repeated), 6) looking for themes across cases, and finally themes across cases are cross checked to develop the final super-ordinate and subordinate themes for the study.

A table of themes is created as guided by IPA protocol, which articulates the data in tabular form. It is generally felt once the themes are published in table format they are concrete in their status i.e. they won't change, see Table 1 for Pilot Study Themes

Superordinate Themes	The Four sides of Sporting Masculinity	Sociocultural structural Aspects of Footwear	The Embodiment of Footballer
Subordinate Themes	Historical	Type	Size
	Performance	Colour	
	Paranoia	Regimes/ Superstition	Muscularity
	Authority	Psychological	

**Table 1: Pilot Study, Table of Themes**

Through analysis three main superordinate themes and ten subordinate themes were extracted and created from the in depth analysis of the data.

In brief, the first superordinate theme, **‘The Four sides of Sporting Masculinity’** and the subsequent subordinate themes, **‘Historical’**, **‘Performance’**, **‘Paranoia’** and **‘Authority’** considers the four axes that appear to be lived experiences of tension for semi-professional footballers in sport. The ‘Historical’ subordinate then reflects upon childhood memories and the idols that these sportsmen had while growing up, and the impact that this had on their future sporting careers. ‘Performance’ relates the role of masculinity and the embodiment of performance on the pitch, there are direct links to the previous subordinate theme, and is indicative of their correlation within the table. ‘Paranoia’ as a subordinate theme reflects upon inadequacies experienced by men in football and their confidence in relation to their lived masculine ideals. This theme also relates to ego and their performance in sport whilst understanding the impact of self-criticality. The final theme in this section,

‘Authority’, considers the role of masculine dominance and authority over other men in football; this plays a particular significance in relation to masculine capital and sporting masculinity theory.

The second superordinate theme **‘Sociocultural structural Aspects of Footwear’**, reflects upon the lived experiences of footballers and the role that sporting-footwear has on them, on the pitch. The themes **‘Type’** and **‘Colour’** of sporting-footwear, relate to the brands and structures of boots chosen to perform football on the pitch; it is significant to note, not only does the brand of boot make a significant impact, in the role of podolinguistics but also colour is the most poignant. In short, if you are going to wear brightly coloured boots on the pitch, you have to be a good player, be resilient to potential homophobia abuse, and there is the risk that other players might want to hurt you. The final two subordinate themes within this superordinate thematic subdivision include **‘Regimes/Superstition’** and the **‘Psychological’**, in relation to sporting-footwear, this exposes ritualistic routines when preparing for a match, i.e. washing laces, knotting laces in a particular style and wearing particular types of football socks that are worn in each match, which are considered lucky. The **‘Psychological’** aspect of sporting-footwear, considered the lived connection between choice of boot, performativity, confidence and winning.

The final superordinate theme **‘The Embodiment of Footballer’**, and its correlating subordinate themes are **‘Size’** and **‘Muscularity’**. These subordinate themes are closely related, but mainly the key issue here is that small men are considered to be less masculine or worthy than big men; this includes size of height and bodily weight. In addition bodily weight refers to muscle rather than fat, and the bigger the muscles embodied on a player the more kudos and respect that player gets. Size and muscle mass play a significant role in the embodiment of masculinity within the football-sporting arena.

Concluding this review of the pilot study, it can be noted that clear thematic material was generated through the engagement of this pilot analysis. It should also be noted that even though this pilot body of work was not published, there is significant material to reflect upon and use in future publications. Nonetheless, this data was presented at '*The Journal of Sport and Society Conference*', in Vancouver, during the winter Olympics 2010, to positive reviews and feedback.

Engaging with the pilot study, confronted the researcher with many initial fears relating to analysis, thematic production and finalising a table of presented results. It also enabled the initial stages of thematic discussion and added value to an in-depth contemplative analysis at an early stage of PhD research. The pilot study, provided insight into the semi-structured interview questions, the method of questioning and finally impact and complications of transcription.

Finally, it can be clearly stated that this pilot study enabled the advancement and insight needed to develop the overall body of work from a small pilot study to a full PhD investigation. Most importantly through presenting this data at a prestigious conference, questions were raised by attendees which provoked further thinking and contemplation and it is with no doubt this enhanced the quality of this work tenfold.

#### **4.9 IPA and the Wider Research Picture**

A Chapter reviewing IPA methodology and its links to this current thesis, would not be complete, without discussing some of the diverse IPA literature which not only demonstrates its range of application but also its versatility. A brief discussion of some selected diverse research articles will be discussed, exposing its use of IPA methodology and its integration into a variety of research settings. The selected papers include one that refer to health research, (as is traditionally understood in IPA research); one that uses IPA to understand the role of inorgasmia and a final paper tries to gain insight into a dancers 'experience of flow'. These papers will now be discussed in turn.



*'Making Sense of Risk: An Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis of Vulnerability to Heart Disease'* (Senior *et al.* 2002) is what could be described as a traditional approach to health psychology research within the IPA domain. In this paper the researchers wanted to understand the 'perception of familial hypercholesterolemia (FH) and its genetic basis in patients diagnosed with, and receiving treatment for FH' (p.157). The paper took great insight into understanding the impact that this disease has on people's health and the role that it has in families with a genetic trait in developing hypercholesterolemia. Through understanding the medical importance of this condition, the researchers gained insight into the treatment of hypercholesterolemia, which in turn allowed understanding into the treatment regimens for these patients; it was also understood that these patients might have other medical conditions such as hypertension or heart disease. It is interesting to note, that the patients involved in this research paper, were already involved in another simultaneous study, discovering their genetic predisposition to hypercholesterolemia.

14 patients (who lived and/or worked in London) were invited to take part in semi-structured interviews to discuss issues that were pertinent to living with hypercholesterolemia. Out of the 14 participants 8 agreed to take part in the IPA study.

The researchers detailed 6 key areas that would be covered in the interviews;

1. the participant's personal and family history of FH and heart disease;
2. experience and perceptions of cholesterol testing and any other symptoms of FH;
3. perceptions of their diagnosis of FH as part of the present trial, including responses to their genetic test results;
4. perceptions of the cause of their FH;
5. perceptions of personal control over FH;
6. perceptions of the consequences of having FH, including the emotional consequences, impact of taking medication and engaging in risk-reducing behaviour (p.160).

The researchers transcribe the interviews and carry out the data analysis as highlighted by Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009); and as demonstrated in this methodology Chapter. The researchers generated 4 key superordinate themes; Casual attributions for FH (the cause of their disease); The process of making causal attributions (a personal theory generating process that the participants had); Consequences of causal attribution (the impact on the life of the participant) and Coping with the risk of heart disease. These highlighted themes, demonstrate the deep insight windowed into the lives of these people living with hypercholesterolemia. The paper continues to discuss the impact of these themes generated and the role that hypercholesterolemia and its links to heart disease has in these people's lives. IPA was used as a tool to gain this insight and understand the role of risk; the paper concludes succinctly by stating 'these people are motivated to understand their increased risk, engaging in an active search for possible causes of FH and adapting their perception of risk within the context of that controllable threat' (Senior *et al.* 2002, p.166).

It is felt that this research paper attunes itself to a traditional model of IPA methodology; through its selection criteria, its creation of themes for interview discussion and its approach to analysis of the data. It can be argued that this paper has demonstrated that IPA is not only effective, but its methodology give the audience insight into a world by which they would never normally understand or potentially know what it means to live with a health 'risk'.

As we move onto the second paper, it is worth remembering that the aim of these final paragraphs is to consider the diversity of IPA, this is particularly evident as I introduce the next paper. *"I don't feel like melting butter": An interpretive phenomenological analysis of experience of "inorgasmia"* (Lavie and Willig, 2005) considers the experiences of women who are unable to experience orgasm. This paper employs an IPA methodology, which will be the focus of this discussion, however, this paper does demonstrate some unique strategies not employed by other IPA research methodologies.

Firstly, the researchers needed to find a device to recruit women who experienced inorgasmia; it appeared that the researchers had a preselected group of women that would be applicable for the study, however, uniquely, to gain more participants the researchers placed advertisements in toilets around Universities in London. Through this recruitment process they were able to gain 6 women into the study.

The data was collected through semi-structured interviews of the 6 participants; the philosophy of using semi-structured interviews was of particular note, 'the nature of the interview encourages interviewees to offer their own definitions, vocabularies and ways of thinking (Lavie and Willig, 2005 cite Silverman, 1999) and thereby enables the researcher to abandon incorrect assumptions and to 'discover' perspectives to those expected (Lavie and Willig, 2005 cite Farr, 1982)' (Lavie and Willig, 2005, p. 117). It can clearly be stated that this study takes a true phenomenological, hermeneutic and idiographic approach to a qualitative research methodology, which shows honesty to IPA.

The analysis of the data is defined by the procedures outlined by Smith *et al.* (1995) i.e. reading of the transcript, note taking, insight into emergent themes, creation of master themes and sub-ordinate themes, in this instance the themes are tabulated for clarity. The research gained insight into the lived experiences of these women and through the generation of theme clustering, was able to understanding how women experiencing inorgasmia carried 'personal and relational' (p.124) meanings to their sense of 'self and subjectivity' (p.124).

It can be concluded that in this example IPA has the ability to be used in such contentious and sensitive issues such as sex therapy. It tackles the insight of these women's lived experiences without, denying them their understanding of how they define, express and communicate living with inorgasmia.

As we move on, Hefferon and Ollis (2006) exceptionally use an IPA methodology, while researching 'professional dancers' experience of flow'. This paper introduces the fact that even though flow and connection in dance is an innate and understood feeling within the professional dancing community, little is actually understood/documentated about this so called 'click' while experiencing flow. The paper aims to establish the existence of flow in dance and secondly to report what environmental conditions can inhibit or enhance a dancer's experience of 'flow'.

The researchers seemed to have had a preselected group of dancers from which to invite into the study; this appears to be a regular theme within IPA research. The researchers contacted 9 elite dancers, through email and/or phone call, and were asked to participate in a semi-structured interview. Methodologically, undertaking semi-structured interviews appears to be common practice within the IPA research community, as it noted throughout this body of work. The interviews were generally conducted face to face, however, as is distinctive in this study one participant was interviewed over the telephone, we have to ask ourselves whether this has an impact on the ability for the researcher to undertake a full integrated IPA approach.

What is most notable about this study is the insight given to the 'Analytical Strategy' described in the methodology. Most research papers using an IPA methodology, give limited or minimal commitment to the analysis of the data and the description of how they undertook this process. However, what is exceptional here is the fact that the paper comments in succinct detail regarding the different stages of analysis and entitle this 'Process of interpretation' (Hefferon and Ollis, 2006, p.146-147). The authors outline the process of analysis and theme production as recommended by Smith, Flowers and Larkin, (2009); what is different within these paragraphs is the terminology used to describe certain aspects of the analysis procedure. For example, the authors refer to the process of 'coding' and 'master listing' (p.149), which Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009)

simply call super-ordinate and sub-ordinate theme production. This is not a particular issue, as is often noted in qualitative methodologies, there are words that are used interchangeably such as coding, master listing and bracketing for instance.

To conclude, this study was able to generate themes, which aided in the conclusion of the initial aims proposed by the study. It was clearly documented that professional dancers interviewed experienced the phenomena of flow and clicking within dance. To return to the second aim, the researchers found that there were a whole variety of issues, which effected 'flow' during dance; these included type of music, volume, lighting, and familiarity with the stage; this extended to personal and social experiences such as ability, confidence and relationships with co-dancers and new choreographers.

To conclude the researchers personally felt that 'IPA enabled me to go beyond quantitative restraints and feel, interpret and understand the experience of flow from an expert's position' (Hefferon and Ollis, 2006, p.157).

To conclude overall, the diversity of the papers discussed demonstrates the versatility and universal applicability of IPA within qualitative research. Considering 'risk' in heart disease through to 'inorgasmia' and the role of 'flow' in professional dancers, it is apparent that IPA is a divergent tool for analysing data. What is of note in this concluding statement is that, the actual methodological approach for analysing the IPA data changes very little. Ultimately, patients are recruited from a wide range of backgrounds, interviewed (normally via a one to one semi-structured interview), the data is analysed using guidelines mapped out by Smith *Harre and Van Langenhove* (1995) and Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009). It appears, that the majority of IPA researchers are demonstrating with their feet that they 'like' these documented methodological approaches to IPA. Reflexively, I feel it will be fascinating to see the future of the methodology

develop, as it becomes used more frequently and tested from different epistemological perspectives.

#### **4.10 Conclusions**

In bringing this Chapter to a close, it is hoped that the overarching methodological approach has been presented with clarity and theoretical precision. Reflecting back over this Chapter an 'Overview of the Methodology/Procedures' (4.2) provides the foundations for the whole Chapter giving insight to the overall process that will be followed. Through gaining insight into the 'Theoretical and Historic Background of IPA' (4.3) presentation of the foreground in which IPA sits has been made evident here, demonstrating IPA's embedded nature in past and present philosophical thinking.

Moving forward, the Chapter then provides a detailed account of the recruitment of participants within this study (4.4), this includes reflection upon the appropriate sample size, and the inclusion and exclusion criteria for the study; this was all discussed while acknowledging IPA's theoretical background.

'The Interview Schedule and The Semi-Structured Interview' (4.5) was then discussed, allowing insight to be gained through the knowledge of the complexities of aligning questions to the interview format, making sure in addition that IPA and the theoretical concepts of IPA were also acknowledged. It is hoped that rigorous argumentation has been provided here to demonstrate the reasoning behind the chosen method of gathering the data.

Discussion surrounding the 'Analysis of Data' (4.6) is considered to be one of the most significant steps in the methodological process. Here in depth acknowledgement was given into the 'Recording/Transcription of the Data' (4.6.1), providing a rationale behind the steps that were chosen. Most significant in this section is the detailed description of the 'Analysis' (4.6.2) process, here a step-by-step discussion was provided, supported by pivotal literature as to the

processes that were needed to be undertaken, leading to the creation of the final thematic material.

In any piece of empirical research, reference needs to be made to the steps that were taken to acknowledge and appreciate 'Validity' (4.7.1) and in particular in a qualitative study, 'Reflexivity' (4.7.2). It can be stated that both of these concepts were highlighted in detail with clear reference to seminal texts within the IPA arena.

To provide clarity as to the feasibility of this large research project, a 'Pilot Study' (4.8.) is essential. It is felt that the pilot study discussed within this Chapter demonstrates the clarity needed to support the undertaking of a larger body of work, such as this one. The methodological approach, the analysis and the data produced provided the critical thinking needed to lay the foundations for undertaking this body of work.

Finally, in providing a complete picture of IPA as a methodology and its uses within the qualitative domain, 'IPA the Wider Research Picture' (4.9), discusses empirical published research that have taken an IPA approach. This section demonstrates the variable domains in which IPA can be utilised, providing evidential insight into the flexibility of IPA in a research project such as this.

In conclusion, it is felt that this Chapter has provided the depth of insight, and the academic rigour in supporting this methodological approach.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **ANALYSIS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

The Chapter will present the key thematic findings through the utilisation of an Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis approach to the data. Insight will be given into some of the methodological tools that were introduced along the way, to support the analysis process, while producing data that is embedded within the epistemological stance of the thesis. Later in this introduction, some insight will be presented on the personal approaches that were utilised throughout the analysis, and which were integral to interpreting clear and valid data.

All the themes will be presented in a 'Table of Themes' [5.1.2], as is traditionally expected within an IPA study. This table will expose the hierarchy of the themes and will give a concise overview of the data produced. Next, these themes will be discussed in greater detail, exposing a clear narrative of the participants' discourse and their relationship to the overarching theoretical underpinnings of this body of work. A final conclusion will be provided, to summarise the narrative of the emergent thematic data.

##### **5.1.1 Embedding the Research**

Eight participants were recruited for this study, and a brief overview of the participants' pseudonym, age, identified sexuality and their area of sport, can be found in the table below. While reviewing the information, it should be stated that a homogenous group of men were recruited for the study. Please note Table 2 below:



Participant Pseudonym	Age	Identified Sexuality	Sport
Chad	30	Homosexual	Squash/Tennis
Ben	20	Heterosexual	Football/Coach
Philip	45	Homosexual	Former Pro-Gymnast
Darwin	19	Heterosexual	Football
Alan	30	Homosexual	Fitness Trainer
Frankie	30	Heterosexual	Football
John	25	Homosexual	Pro-Body Builder
Joseph	35	Heterosexual	Rugby/Football

**Table 2: Overview of Details of Recruited Participants (including pseudonym)**

It should also be noted that, even though the participants have been categorised by sexuality in the above table, generally the participants will be viewed as a whole. However, when necessary, an exposure and discussion of sexuality will be clarified in relation to the participants' discourse.

Analysing the data and allowing multiple epistemologies to be exposed can and will at times be a complicated process. With this in mind, some insight will be given.

Due to the fact that this study is an IPA study, terminology will closely reflect the epistemological stances gained from utilising this form of research. Therefore language such as 'interpretive', 'phenomenological', 'idiographic' and 'hermeneutic' will be used throughout, to support the embedded quality of the research in IPA. Furthermore, since the theoretical stance of the analysis stems from Masculinity Theory and Queer Theory, reference to both stances will be used where appropriate. Masculinity Theory is the tool through which binaries

and subordinate masculinities are exposed, while Queer Theory takes these subordinate masculinities and gives them a voice.

With these points at the forefront of the analytical IPA mind, a structured and embedded analysis should be presented.

### 5.1.2 Table of Themes

Here the complete Table of Themes are presented:

Superordinate Themes	(5.2.1) Embodied Unrest of the 'Bulked' Torso: Muscle Ideology and Performative Violence	(5.3.1) Performative Masculinities Embodied in Homosocial Environments
	(5.2.1.1) 'To Bulk or Not to Bulk' - Body Parts and Muscle Bulk	(5.3.1.1) 'Cock-Supremacy' a New Tenet of Masculine Capital and the Homoerotic Gaze, Embodied in the Locker Room Male Sex Role
Subordinate Themes	(5.2.1.2) Disillusioned Embodiment	(5.3.1.2) Homosociality in the Locker Room
	(5.2.1.3) 'Bulked' Embodied Violence: Verbal and Physical Violence	(5.3.1.3) "Passing as Straight": De-Emphasising Queer in Fear of Homophobia
		(5.3.1.4) Performing in Sporting-Footwear: Shaping Homosocial Masculine Bonds, The Walk/Feet/Shoes Triad

**Table 3: Final 'Concreted' Table of Superordinate and Subordinate Themes**

### 5.1.3 Narrative of Themes

As a precursor to the full analysis of the research data, a narrative of the 'Table of Themes' will be given. The aim is to provide a supplement to the Table 3, but also to provide an interlinking description of the themes, demonstrating support for the overarching thematic analysis. From the table it can be noted that there are two Superordinate Themes, with seven Subordinate Themes.

The first Superordinate Theme, **'Embodied Unrest of the 'Bulked' Torso: Muscle Ideology and Performative Violence' (5.2.1)**, reveals the desire to achieve altered body status, through the bulking of particular body parts, while focusing on the aesthetic appeal of representing hegemony through a preoccupation with bulked muscles (**Subordinate Theme: "To Bulk or Not to Bulk"- Body Parts and Muscle Bulk', (5.2.1.1)**). The Superordinate Themes' narrative then moves on to contemplate the role of disillusionment with the masculine body, and the impact of comparing bodies, while the role of masculine agency reflects upon dysmorphia and the comparison of the body as 'machine like', (**Subordinate Theme: 'Disillusioned Embodiment', (5.2.1.2)**). Finally the narrative of the theme considers how these bulked bodies (disillusioned or not) are utilised within the sporting setting and their role as violent weapons, (**Subordinate Theme: "Bulked' Embodied Violence: Verbal and Physical Violence', (5.2.1.3)**).

The second Superordinate, **'Performative Masculinities Embodied in Homosocial Environments', (5.3.1)** reflects upon the role of masculinity in homosocial environments. Of particular interest within this narrative is the locker room and the sporting environment, and close consideration will be given to sexuality within this theme. The narrative of many of the participants' discourse recounts the importance of the size of the penis in the locker room (cock supremacy), and the impact of 'gazing' at other men in the homosocial locker room setting, (**Subordinate Theme: 'Cock-Supremacy' a New Tenet of Masculine Capital and the Homoerotic Gaze, Embodied in the Locker Room**

**Male Sex Role’, (5.3.1.1)).** This theme interprets in more detail masculine constructing events, the discourse that exists in the locker room environment, and the resulting impact on Masculine Capital and sexuality, **(Subordinate Theme: ‘Homosociality in the Locker Room’, (5.3.1.2)).** Developing the narrative further, it becomes a clear component of the homosexual participants’ discourse that passing as a heterosexual man within the sporting context is considering significant, and a particular amount of analysis will be dedicated to the role of homophobia, **(Subordinate Theme: “Passing as Straight”: De-Emphasising Queer in Fear of Homophobia’, (5.3.1.3)).** The final Subordinate Theme takes a more abstract approach to homosocial environments, whereby the relationship between embodiment, walking, and footwear is exposed in relation to performativity and masculinity. In this instance the abstract narrative asks the reader to consider footwear as an embodied masculinity-enabling tool, through which homosocial sports can be performed and extended by masculine agency and power, and thus encapsulating other themes that have been discussed to allow the temporal future thinking of this theme, **(Subordinate Theme: ‘Performing in Sporting-Footwear: Shaping Homosocial Masculine Bonds, The Walk/Feet/Shoes Triad’, (5.3.1.4)).**

Taking this structured narrative in mind, an elaboration on the themes can be presented.

## **5.2 Presentation of the Thematic Data**

Each of the themes will now be discussed in turn, giving acknowledgement to their relationship to the participant's discourse, and their connection to this body of works epistemological underpinnings, while utilising IPA to analyse the data.

### **5.2.1 Superordinate Theme: Embodied Unrest of the 'Bulked' Torso: Muscle Ideology and Performative Violence**

In order to encapsulate the **'Embodied Unrest of the 'Bulked Torso'**, consideration needs to be given to particular bulked body parts e.g. arms, chest and shoulders, and their relationship to the size of the muscles that are embodied, their performative size within which demonstrates the complexity of men's entrenched British body politic. This approach takes a triangulated perspective of the theme, dismantling a structure of hierarchy in the perception of these three concepts.

It was evident through the analysis of the transcripts that muscle and its representations of masculinity in sport were paramount in each subject's thinking, while deconstructing and reconstructing this notion of masculinity and muscle. These themes will now be discussed in turn with detailed commentary reflecting the analysis process and exposure of the data.

#### **5.2.1.1 Subordinate Theme: 'To Bulk or Not to Bulk'- Body Parts and Muscle Bulk**

It became evident that all participants, heterosexual and homosexual alike, felt that body size (muscle bulk) were significant in understanding the body's role in the representation of masculinity in sport. It was clear from the participants' experiences that muscular men did not go unnoticed within their sporting fraternities, and the participants commented on their desire to look like and perform like the muscular sportsmen. While reflecting on the muscular body form, some participants openly described specific parts of the male physique that

embodied their view of the sporting lived experience of masculinity. For example, John states in his interview:

‘I think that’s why arms and a big chest, and, you know, strong legs, you know, and, you know, the six pack not so much because I don’t think that’s very masculine, its quite feminine, I think that’s more ladylike. So it’s more a big chest, big arms, big legs, you know, all the ... a strong back, you know. You sort of look for quite masculine traits, so the V shape, you know, where the shoulders and chest are big, you know. It’s that breadth as well’.

(John Interview Transcript)

The bodied relationship that is explored here represents a clear desired vision of the embodied bulked masculine form. John’s statement allows us to perceive a constructed form of masculinity that focuses on the body parts, which represent a form of masculine hegemony. This structured way of viewing the body, from an abstract perspective, is representative of a Frankenstein complex, building the perceived ‘perfect man’ through body parts. John’s constructed view of the bulked masculine form could be perceived as an overly top-heavy form of embodiment, it could be described as Neanderthal like. This in turn signifies and represents caveman-like qualities of dominance and power, providing an introduction to the concept of masculine agency; this is similar to Fussell’s (1991) experience of his changing body, confidence and violence.

Significantly, the ‘six pack’ in John’s discourse was described as feminine, and ‘not really a masculine trait’. Taking an analytical approach to this, it could be interpreted that a six-pack thins the waist significantly, and so decreases the core mid of the body in aesthetic size. Nonetheless, as John acknowledges, it does directly aid a perceived increase in the top half of the torso:

‘He’s a 32” waist, he’s got a 48” chest, and you know, perfect V-shape, six pack, his arms are like huge’.

(John Interview Transcript)

When exposing the complexity and fluid temporality of masculinity and the body, even John doesn’t really know how to define the masculine bulked body as his interview evolves. It could be suggested that the six pack is a masculine-embodied quality, as it represents fitness, health and engagement in physical activity. However, it may not be a body part that, when highly defined, signifies hegemonic masculine qualities. Frankie gives some insight into observing other men’s bodies and muscular body parts:

‘I’ve seen one guy and, you know, seen some pretty muscular men and thought, you know, I wouldn’t mind having a bit of - you know, some of your shoulders or, you know your chest muscles right now, or those big guns’.

(Frankie Interview Transcript)

It could be interpreted that Frankie is taking a passive aesthetic male role in observing other men, and trying to fulfil a desire to aspire to those bulked body part qualities. Alan also adds discourse, which follows this same thematic concept:

‘Your legs have to be shown so that they can see the lines of your body... then when I started becoming an aerobics teacher I started wearing shorts because I got bigger thighs, so I felt confident I could wear them’.

(Alan interview Transcript)

It can be noted that, through the power of body aesthetic and the conscious knowledge that Alan’s body is observed on a daily as an aerobics teacher, he

makes an active effort to expose his body. This concept provides him with the power and masculine agency to change his clothing and expose his body as his masculine agency increases.

As this theme's narrative moves forward, this role of masculine agency and the passive aesthetic are accentuated, through the analysis and interpretation process. Analysis of the data presents a preoccupation with the size of the participants' bulked muscles, the focus being on big muscles and a big muscular torso. It could be said: the bigger, the better.

Alan, a homosexual gym instructor, discusses in length his experience of 'big' men from a professional and personal point of view. Below is an in depth extract from his interview. Phenomenologically it should be noted that particular words such as 'big' and 'muscular' have been highlighted to reiterate their significance in Alan's lived world:

'Society perceive these **big** rugby players, you know, yeah, **big** is better, definitely. That's how they ... they get more respect than anyone else.

**Have you ever thought maybe I'll try and do ... be like that?**

Oh I wish, always. I'd love to be **big**. There was one stage I wanted to take steroids and think, you know, maybe if take steroids people would respect me more, if I was as big as that guy, you know, that **muscle** Mary presenter who I talked about. If I was as **big** as him maybe you know, more people would come to my class. You know because it's true, they all get the job, I mean, I'd love to go and audition to be a presenter. But because I don't look like that I won't get the job. I might be very good at what I do, and know exactly and to a technical ... because I like to be quite technical and know what I'm talking about, I can do just as well as



him, I've got just as much personality, but because I don't look like him, you'll never see me on the stage in New Zealand, because there's a guy who works, he used to be the manager for Nuffield, John he was my trainer. All the people that train, the body pump instructors, look the same. They're all **muscle** Mary guys, they're **big**, they're either straight or gay, but you know that saying that, the funny thing is, is on the DVDs I haven't ever seen a gay – a gay presenter. And if they are gay they must hide it really well because all those guys that teach the pump are really butch, I mean if you went to a pump class there, you wouldn't come back. I mean it's scary, because even on ... even on the, when we go to the training and they teach us something, the guys, they're so **big** and I just think to myself, okay, I'd love to look like that but that's not ... you don't get that **big** from teaching pump. ... I noticed on my course when I did pump there's a **muscle** guy there, they loved him, even though he wasn't a good teacher, just because he looked **muscular**, yeah, he's going to be on the front cover of Men's Health type of guy. You know, whereas the skinny gay guys at the back ... when we go to the quarterlies I hate it because there's all the **muscle** guys there and they ... they always say, "You've got to lift more weights." They say to me my weights are too light. They always tell me that. I lift the same lunges as them, I can't do chest like them, because you know obviously I've got a small frame. But yeah, I'd love to be, sometimes I'd love to be that **big**. But then I've learnt to accept that I'd look strange if I was too **big** I think. I mean I could take the steroids but I'd look strange'.

(Alan Interview Transcript)

This extended extract from Alan's interview gives a thought-provoking snap shot into the insecurities that follow his fitness career. It can be observed that Alan is

preoccupied by the fact that bigger is better in fitness; he reiterates terms such as 'butch', 'muscular' and 'straight', aligning himself within heteronormative and patriarchal social understanding. As a homosexual man within the fitness industry, Alan feels that being openly gay marginalises him; it places him second best next to his heterosexual 'butch, muscular' counterparts, within this sporting community.

Alan refers to 'skinny' guys who work out at the back of training sessions as less worthy counterparts within the Bodypump fraternity. There is a sense of desperation and need to please his clients by being bigger; Alan considers the positive impact that steroids would have on his body if he was to take them, and how others would perceive him. There is a sense that Alan has taken many years in accepting, that his body type and his frame would be unsuitable for steroid taking, and the aesthetic representation his body would have as an excessive hyper-mesomorphic build. Alan also enforces heteronormative behaviours within the gym environment, expressing submissive behaviours within a hegemonic Bodypump hierarchy, fulfilling statements such as 'big is straight'. What Alan is also stating here, is that he must be a subordinate homosexual male, since he is not big enough to fulfil 'big' heteronormative physical qualities. With reference to masculine agency and power, this role of 'big' appears to be a factor, which imposes friction between self satisfaction and embodied aesthetic change.

Following on from Alan's 'bigger is better' narrative, we return to Frankie's earlier discussion on how certain body parts symbolised masculinity to him. It was clear that he didn't feel the same pressures as the homosexual participants to continually conform to masculine body stereotypes. As conversation into his body and the size of his body continued, he made it clear that his views on the symbolic representation of a masculine body type has changed over the years, and will continue to change in the future:

'Size? No. I don't think it does (muscle representing masculinity), not in the-, I think maybe as a young man maybe, you know, you see these big guys out and I think maybe as-, you know, as a teenager kind of up to about the age of 18, yes, I think more so but I think as I've got older and you realise, you know, there's other stuff involved in life, you know, like holding down a job, you know, supporting your family, you know, keeping a home, that type of thing, I think you realise, you know, that there are other elements of masculinity that you don't see. So I think certainly my image of masculinity has certainly changed as I've got older and got-, you know, as I've got older I've probably gone a bit more mature'.

(Frankie Interview Transcript)

and:

'I think with the changing world as well and, you know, the changing image of man that, you know, is always going on, I think, yes, I'm sure it will. Again, it will change as I-, you know, maybe as I-, when I-, you know, when I start a family maybe, you know. Maybe my image of, you know, what's masculine-, when I raise my own children and I portray my image of masculinity to them I think it'll probably change again'.

(Frankie Interview Transcript)

It is significant that Frankie had gained insight into the temporal changes of his body. This means that as he ages, Frankie notices his body changing in time also, we know this as the aging process. He could be suggested that as he ages the factors that shape and define masculine agency, change also. Connell (1995) supports this view of temporality and the body. He argues, 'bodies are temporal, move through time, and with those changes embrace bodily experiences' (p.56). It is evident that the lived experiences of the body, retain and embody the memories of masculine physical change. Temporality and agency work in tandem

here, through the maturity of the body, and the choices that can be imposed upon it change also.

Nonetheless, in contrast to bulked size and the temporal changes of the body, Ben notes that his height was a particular issue for him within professional football:

‘...I was quite a late developer in the height wise so I, I was always the smallest player on the team, lots of people around me were like taller than me and everything like that, it was always a physical thing, but I always thought to myself, I had a better work ethic than everyone else there, so I would catch up one day in height [laughs] if I did [both laughs]. I think I am about 5’9, I was 4’11 in year seven and eight, so like it was quite hard at them points cause obviously I was the smallest’.

(Ben Interview Transcript)

Darwin explores a similar experience in football:

‘I did get the odd bit of sort of grief, “what you gonna do? You’re tiny. Look at you”. And they’d think... You’d see me out on the wing sort of quite skinny’.

(Darwin Interview Transcript)

In trying to understand his experience of being smaller, Darwin expresses his disdain at being pushed around:

‘I’m sick of this guy pushing me around. It might be a click in my head sort of....but if they were not far off as quick as you they would splatter you and every now and again, but then after a while sort of getting booted in the air might start you to question sort of,

am I gonna let this guy carry on doing this and sort of potentially bully me, or give him back and see what happens there?'.  
(Darwin Interview Transcript)

Frankie and Darwin both appeared to be filled with a sense of dissatisfaction with their height. In his interview Frankie referred to fighting on the pitch:

'Fighting isn't really something I'm keen to get involved with but I do get involved with banter a lot. My friends call it short man syndrome. Yes, so I think the way I am and the way I am on the pitch is a little but- I'm more aggressive but, you know, maybe I think I need to be because I'm, you know, maybe a little bit smaller than everyone else'.

(Frankie Interview Transcript)

Frankie justifies the acceptance of violence and aggression in relation to his height, by giving it a named condition, 'Short Man Syndrome'. It is interesting that, as a player of shorter height, being dominated by others reduces the amount of Masculine Capital expressed on the pitch; 'short' in this instance is clearly a less than masculine quality. To reinstate some form of hegemonic existence on the pitch, violence and aggression are used to stamp authority and presence on the situation. Frankie goes on to express that he teaches young boys how to play football and that some of these younger boys will play with older teenagers. Frankie argues:

'You know older experienced guys try and take- you know, I guess bully the younger boys. So I try and show them that by sticking up to them and not letting them-, you know, it's going to be okay, you know. It's just an acceptable part of the game'.

(Frankie Interview Transcript)

As a compensatory reaction to his short man syndrome, and the inequalities he feels with regard to his height, Frankie has been able to use violence as a means to reinstate himself. In parallel, however, through the process of remodelling and indoctrination of the youth footballers, he has been able to expose model hegemonic sporting behaviours.

In contact sports it was evident that size and the risk of domination and bullying was at the forefront of Frankie, Ben and Darwin's mind. It is interesting to note that one participant interviewed (Philip) was rather short in height, but had an impressive muscular physique, which was particularly suited to his role in gymnastics:

'There are builds like me, which are quite short and stocky, quite muscular, would be more suited for floor and vault, because they have got, I don't know exactly what it is actually- speed and just power really'.

(Philip Interview Transcript)

John a 24 year old body builder reflects on his height in the gym:

'I'm only 5'8", so I've probably got some sort of psychological thing about my height as well. I do laugh saying I'm a dwarf and.... But I think falling into the gym setting that I've fallen into and .... I think it's better because height doesn't matter in football and rugby. In basketball the heights an issue, whereas when you're in the weights in the gym and you're training, you know, for body building and stuff, height doesn't come into it, and being too tall can actually be a stumbling block, because the shorter you are the more symmetrical you are and the easier it is to put on mass'.

(John Interview Transcript)

It is interesting to note that John goes onto state:

‘So it seems to be a positive as well as a negative, so it’s all actually trying to turn all those positive into neg...all those negatives into positives, it is all key for me at the minute’.

(John Interview Transcript)

It is apparent that height remains a significant issue for John, with a sense that he is convincing himself that all is ok, but conscious ‘it’s all key at the minute’.

Each of the participants who saw themselves as shorter referred to height in one form or another, indicating that it impacted on their perceived embodiment and the role of masculine agency. Chad, on the other hand, was a 6’7” basketball and squash player; it was observed through the data that he did not even consider the role that height played in relation to performativity in squash or tennis. This leads us to a sense that, when a sportsman feels ‘tall enough’, their height becomes a non-issue to both themselves and their peers. In other words, embodied temporality and masculine agency have limits when height is observed, but not muscular bulk.

In bringing this subordinate theme to a close, insight has been gained into size of muscles and the physical height of masculinity. Nonetheless, when discussing the perfect body size with John, he gave the following answer:

‘I have got a target weight and target stats that I have in my head. I’m actually... Well I want to keep my waist small and I want my chest to look bigger to a 48. I would like 17/18 inch arms and its only 15 inch arms at the minute, 44 inch chest and my waist is 32, so that’s fine with that one. But it’s just having to work and eat and you know, do all the things that I have to do in conjunction with that. But it’s a long process’.

This falls in line with many theorists' discussions on the perfect male form (Fussel, 1991; Glassner, 1988; 1992; 1995; Klein, 1993; Mishkind *et al.* 1987; Sabo and Runfola, 1980 and Simpson, 1994, to name but a few), whereby men who have a keen interest in developing their body are continuously mapping out and creating new goals and targets. That temporality, the impact of observing other men's bodies, and the power of will and desire, can effect a change in agency and hegemonic status. Gaining insight from John's transcript, he refers to the fact that there is always work, there is always a new eating regime, and that you have to do all this in conjunction with life to make a change. Though interpretation and analysis it is observed that embodiment of masculinity is a complex temporal process, which is always at risk of further change: it is fragile. Managing a sporting life and altering the body can be a fractious process, and things that cannot be changed cause an acting out of hegemonic masculine behaviour. It could be suggested that this complex psychological process between passive observation, embodied change and bulking the body, leaves the dualism between mind and body disillusioned.

#### **5.2.1.2 Subordinate Theme: Disillusioned Embodiment**

This theme focuses on the insecurity and dissatisfaction of trying to bulk the masculine body, while understanding the socially indoctrinated belief that muscularity leads to success and happiness. The role of comparing bodies between friends appears to be a vehicle through which masculine agency and insecurity of embodiment are brought to the fore, especially as directed by one of the homosexual participants. By engaging in this unstable state of bodily flux, talk of steroids and body dysmorphia are introduced, leading finally to the concept that the body is considered a machine for altering. Work undertaken by Keane (2005) and Grogan (2008) highlight the concerns regarding body image, masculinity and steroids.



To begin insight into this themes analysis, it was evident from Ben's interview that during his childhood and even into adulthood, there were physical insecurities that impacted on his sense of embodied masculine completeness. Height is a genetically fixed physical attribute, whereas size of muscularity can be developed and trained over time.

It was particularly evident that one homosexual participant experienced pressure to conform and to alter his physical shape to attain a certain level of muscularity, largely through insecurity and dissatisfaction with his body. John develops an in-depth narrative relating these experiences during the interview:

'I can see flaws and I know how it needs to look to be as good as other people in the gym because although they've been training for six/seven years more, and some of the guys are on steroids and stuff. I'm still comparing them even though I'm not there or not using what they are using'.

(John Interview Transcript)

In relation to his embodied dissatisfaction, John refers to the use of steroids within his sporting fraternity and it is worth remembering that Alan referred to steroids also in the previous subordinate theme. This repeated reference to steroids makes it significant enough to provide some commentary as to its prevalence within this study, whilst not significant enough to justify existing as an individual theme. Initially, it is interesting to reflect on the fact that it was only homosexual men, who referred to steroids as an aid to increase the size of their bodies. The homosexual participants didn't directly relate their sexuality to this dilemma although, reading into John's transcript in more detail, he later refers to the fact that he felt physically bigger guys within the gay community are synonymous with popularity, success and confidence:

'I would say that most of my social life would revolve around the gym and the [pause] positive attributes from the gym, like the

attention you get after you've finished your workout, you know, when you go to a club, it's sort of, you know, you do more things, you get a bit more confidence to take your top off, which I still haven't managed to do yet. But I hear that comes with time'.

(John Interview Transcript)

Ultimately, John and Alan considered the use of steroids to make their bodies bigger so that they are socially more acceptable in the work place and in their social lives. Nonetheless, there is a sense that both participants' reliance on steroids was due to a feeling of helplessness and/or frustration. Alan felt that if he turned to steroids he might get the 'respect' he deserved for his commitment to sporting industry. John simply felt this frustration due to comparing his body to fellow body builders who were already taking steroids, stating, 'I'm still comparing them even though I'm not there or not using what they are using'. Steroids in this instance could be referred to as a quick fix solution to hegemonic hypermesomorphic masculinity: a metaphor for hegemonic masculinity in a syringe. Injecting steroids into the body could also be considered as injecting Masculine Capital into the body, almost buying your way into the hegemonic hierarchy. We have to question, are both these participants living a life of dissatisfaction? Or is the homosexual/sporting community responsible for their lack of physical bodily satisfaction, or are these men continually dissatisfied with their body and looking for quick fix solutions. It could also be suggested as argued by Goldman (1984) the consideration and use of steroids is associated with embodiment and risk.

John continued to develop his personal insights into his drive to be physically accepted within his community of homosexual friends. He demonstrates a drive to compare himself to his best friend, but simply highlights his continual physical dissatisfaction with his body. John feels that this preoccupation with the perfect body is a 'gay trait':

'I'm just-, I have that comparison that seems to be going through my head, which I think a lot of people do, because my best friend, he's got the same mindset, although I look at him and think he's amazingly hot. He's a 32" waist, he's got a 48" chest, and, you know, perfect V shape, six pack, his arms are like huge. He-, he describes himself the same way. I would describe myself, and it seems to be a gay trait because everyone's comparing themselves to the next person and everyone wants to be better or just, as good at as, and sort of, you know ...

**Interviewer: What are you, you know, emulating for? What is it that you're trying to display, or achieve, or ...?**

For me, I would say ... A lot of people would say "Oh, I'm just doing this for this or that." I'm very competitive and I'm doing it because I want to be better than everyone else in London'.

(John Interview Transcript)

It is evident that John felt he had to compete with his friends to be 'better than everyone else in London'. It is essential to question what John means by 'gay trait'; taking insight into his overall interview, the interpretation of this comment suggests that John is living in what he calls a 'gay bubble'. He lives and breaths homosexualised body conscious culture, obsessed with the ideal hypermesomorphic masculine form. In this instance this 'gay trait', is interpreted as the searching and comparing of his body against other homosexual men, until reaching his physical embodied ideal. This 'gay trait' perhaps symbolises the struggle to 'out' oneself, and fight to sit within a hierarchy of the homosexual physical ideal.

In addition to the fact that John was not only dissatisfied with his body, but he also had, what could be suggested as body dysmorphia:

'I would see myself as having thin arms, as being-, a fat stomach and skinny legs, and my friends would be like "Oh no, no, no," but I'm like "No, I ...". And if I look at a picture I can, you know, break it down, what all needs to be changed, what all that needs to be fixed'.

(John Interview Transcript)

It has been well documented within the literature, Klein (1993); Messner (1992); Pronger (1990; 1995) Simpson (1994) that body dysmorphia is a common issue amongst male athletes. It is evident from both the field notes, reflexive diaries and the fact that the principle researcher interviewed this participant, that John did not have thin arms, he did not have a fat stomach and by no means were his legs skinny. In actual fact, John fulfilled a clear hypermesomorphic image of muscle bound masculinity. It is clear that John felt his body was like a machine, that he could fix each part of his body, modify them and improve them. This notion of targeting and treating the body like a machine is clearly documented in Klein's (1993) study on body builder subculture. Klein (1993) highlights body builder discourse, whereby bodybuilders talk about 'this is leg day'; this is 'bicep day' that each day has a focus, and through this approach the whole body can be trained and 'fixed' on a weekly/daily basis.

With our focus currently on John, his drive to be bigger, better and the 'best in London' seemed to be rooted in his childhood:

'I want to be one of the ones that everyone wants and everyone aspires to be. Popularity-wise I've got that now. However, bodily-wise I'm, you know, now competing with those to ... Popularity seems to be a very key trigger for me, which would be quite telling because when I grew up in primary school my-, I sat on a table by myself and had no-one to eat lunch with. Everyone was related to

everyone else, so I didn't get invited to birthday parties or anything, and that sort of ... I think those psychological wounds are still there and I have this need to be popular and be up with the rest of them, be the centre of attention, you know. And I'll turn round and say, "No, no, I don't," but there is, you know, a bit of me that needs to ...'.

(John Interview Transcript)

John's interview demonstrates that in reality he isn't a machine, and that through experiences that have marginalised him as a child, he has risen up to combat adversity and subordination. Using his body as a tool to slice his way through bodybuilding subculture, and through the use of his sexuality and his mental drive, he believes that he can make himself popular and the 'centre of attention'. Sadly, while interpreting his interview, it feels as if John is still unhappy, and unable to love the body which sits somewhat disillusioned on his bones: 'I think those psychological wounds are still there'.

#### **5.2.1.3 Subordinate Theme: 'Bulked' Embodied Violence: Verbal and Physical Violence**

This subordinate theme, considers the role the body plays within sport and its involvement in bodily violence. The participants discussed in this theme mainly relate to rugby and football, and even those that were not directly involved in these contact sports made reference to their significance.

Initially, brief insight will be given to the role that verbal abuse plays in these sports. Whilst it could be argued that the voice is not embodied, in this thesis it is considered as an extension of a lived internal experience. Reference will be given to the role of 'battle' language within the participants' discourse of embodied violence in sport. Next the role of feet, legs and shoes will be highlighted; considering the 'boot' as a weapon that is embodied at the end of the

leg and lives on the foot. Finally, muscle, power, protection and strength, and the paradox of weakness in sport will finalise this theme.

As an aside, and from a key anthropological perspective, it is interesting to note that none of the homosexual participants interviewed within this study engaged themselves currently in contact sports. Whilst it was clear that the homosexual participants had views on violence in sport, it should be noted that most of the experiences discussed in this theme are from a heterosexual perspective. When the sexuality of the participant is of note and related to the discussion, the reader will be made aware.

Shouting insults at other players appeared to be the initial stage of violence in contact sports. Joseph states:

‘I will confront someone, swear and say, in whatever language you prefer it to be recorded.....don’t do that, that’s beyond the rules, or screw you, or fuck you, or however you escalate it’.

(Joseph Interview Transcript)

Joseph’s evident aggressive tone, ‘I will confront’ them swear and say...’ implies both a lack of fear, and ultimately a disregard for legitimate rules of appropriate societal behaviour. It could be argued that this is a demonstration of his hegemonic masculinity, his defiance at falling into line and demonstrating that he is a ‘big wheel’ (David and Brannon, 1976). It is felt that this is communicated more explicitly while swearing at other the other teams players, ‘screw you, or fuck you, or however you escalate it’. It is particularly significant that swearing is used in conjunction with the notion of ‘escalating it’; in this sense it is interpreted that Joseph wants physical contact with the other team’s players. He wants to use his verbal worth or his **Embodied Verbal Weapon**, as a stairway to physical violence.

Whilst verbal abuse may not be considered universally to be violent, or a weapon, through the process of IPA, the author observes that the voice is an extension of the lived experiences. These embodied verbal thoughts and ideas are cogitated in such a way, that through lived experience we understand the damage they can do, and the provocation they can instigate.

A typical example of this embodied verbal weapon was experienced by Frankie, when physical violence turned to insults about his mother:

‘There have been many times when I have voiced my opinions at them [other opponents]. I would say in terms of physical fights that’s maybe happened twice with me. Its more a verbal thing with me. The first time I was having a bit of I guest banter with someone from the other team. I tackled them, put the ball through their legs which is a-, I guess insult in football and the next thing I knew they’d turned around and just kicked me which was ridiculous and we kind of got up and we had a scrap there and the second time was when someone insulted my mother which is just personal thing to me. I just don’t think that’s necessary’.

(Frankie Interview Transcript)

Firstly, Frankie admits that it is a ‘verbal thing with me’; there is almost a sense of pride in the fact that he is verbally, rather than physically, abusive. He thrives on the experience of the embodied verbal weapon. Nonetheless, he adds that he ended up in a ‘scrap’ with a player on the opposite team, who then insulted his mother. In the hierarchy of verbal insults, this is evidently a step too far for Frankie who makes it very clear ‘I don’t think that’s very necessary’. Whilst bravado runs high on the pitch, enforcing a presence of orthodox masculinity, so too does emotion, leaving sensitivities to insults and aggression at their most exposed. It is common knowledge, if you want to hurt someone the most, you insult someone they love, and this is evident here.

Physical violence and verbal insults appear to be experienced together. In this study physical violence is often described in battle/war language, in emotionally expressive detail, to reiterate the violence experienced by the participants. At other times, participants use words that are developed in a linguistic onomatopoeic style to expose the descriptive qualities of sport warfare. Before a battle can commence, it is important to give yourself a little prep-talk. This quote gives the impression that going into a match is almost like going into battle:

‘Yeah the greater risk of injury, there is such an intense contact sport, and your role without the ball is to stop the person with the ball, by any means necessary to get them down, [participant demonstrates with inverted commas], over necessary, that’s vigorous with it because obviously, it is someone else trying to get you down, so you can break a leg from that, you can hurt your back from that, you can do all sorts of damage’.

(Ben Interview Transcript)

For instance, Darwin uses the same word repetitively to demonstrate that someone could hurt:

‘You take him on, you take us on sort of thing where someone gets splattered. The guy that splatters him would get splattered the next time; he got the ball sort of thing’.

(Darwin Interview Transcript)

Darwin’s use of the word ‘splatter’ highlights the action of squashing or flattening a member of the team during the game. From a phenomenological perspective, it is interesting to note a lack of diversity in the participant’s language; he uses the same word to describe slightly different forms of attack, and you can be ‘spattered’ as a result of an attack.



Darwin later in his interview uses a new word to describe someone being attacked:

‘Next time he got the ball someone else **clattered** him and then he sort of ended up, I don’t think he finished the game. I think they took him off before he got hurt sort of thing’.

(Darwin Interview Transcript)

Again, the use of the word ‘clatter’, appears linguistically out of context, nonetheless, within the structure of the sentence and the onomatopoeic approach to the use of language, we understand and feel the clatter of the opponents’ body. Taking this a metaphor a step further, it could be interpreted that the use of clatter, refers to china and/or tableware; in this instance we could consider the body, and its bones, delicate like china, ready to be broken by the appropriate hyper-masculine male.

Legs, feet, and shoes, are important weapons in contact field sports; legs and feet are also the body part most likely to be damaged as a result of injury, on-going into this lower limb battle. Darwin makes an interesting phenomenological development, versing the noun ‘boot’ thus:

‘You’re sort of inviting yourself to either get some verbal grief or to get booted by someone’.

(Darwin Interview Transcript)

and;

‘As he came with the ball the lad then just booted him, smash in the knee’.

(Darwin Interview Transcript)

This representation of the boot as a weapon, and 'booted' as an act of violence is highly significant to this thesis. The role of sporting footwear and its role in violence in sport will now be exposed in more detail in this theme.

John and Darwin give their insights into what damage can occur through 'booting':

'You'd get a dead leg, I don't know, like gash, or stud mark or something'.

(John Interview Transcript)

'He was a horrible sod. Like he'd got a reputation throughout the whole league for being horrible and like he'd broken about three legs, done about three knees in'.

(Darwin Interview Transcript)

It is evident that the structure of the boot and the use of the boot as a weapon can, impact and hurt competitors within the game. Legs and the damage of legs are embodied representations of the damage boots can inflict on a sports player. It could be argued that the boot in football and rugby is an extension of visual masculinity; almost like going into battle with a gun or spear. Like the biceps are your guns, the boots are the studded armour for the feet. Developing the use of boots as weapons, Darwin, continues by stating:

'You quite often get sort of "You look gay in those boots. Look at you, you queer with your daft boots on". You get "Right, if you're gonna wear them, that means I'm gonna boot you in the air next time you get it". You'd get sort of a bit physical'.

(Darwin Interview Transcript)

Firstly, this multi-layered quote exposes the use of homophobic language to feminise an opponent's choice of footwear, probably, in this instance to

marginalise and subordinate his masculinity from the offset. This use of the embodied verbal weapon makes a sportsman question his choice of footwear and potentially question his Masculine Capital. He then develops the use of the term 'boot', and states that he is 'gonna boot you in the air'. Interpreting this statement, it could be argued that 'booting in the air' is more violent than 'booting'.

Developing this theme further, consideration needs to be given to the muscle, power, and strength behind the boot to cause damage. The body is the power, it is the capital that allows a player to boot someone in the air and inflict injury. However, it is interesting to note that when it came to discussing violence in sport and causing damage, Joseph was extremely ethically minded:

'Never throw a punch. Never throw a punch in anger on a rugby pitch I will say that straight away'.

(Joseph Interview Transcript)

Then on the other hand, Joseph then argues that you might need to use illegal violence to get an advantage over your opponent:

'So the escalation in rugby I guess is, okay, we've got to go beyond physical force illegally to intimidate or to gain an advantage over your opponent'.

(Joseph Interview Transcript)

Johns goes onto argue:

'I guess I have always wrestled with that, because I guess I'd always played football in the spirit that people do stuff, but everyone does it and one does it maliciously. And I think that the cynical aspect of football where people use physical .....use illegal tactics

to gain an advantage, actually those illegalities in football are normalities in rugby’.

(Joseph Interview Transcript)

We have to question what constitutes illegal violence. Most probably it is the usual violence that occurs in every game of football and rugby. Nonetheless, it is noteworthy that Joseph tries to legitimatise the use of illegal tactics in football, stating these are simply ‘normalities in rugby’.

Frankie tries to defend the acceptable use of violence in sport again by stating:

‘I don’t think violence is acceptable. I just-, I think it’s a necessary part of the game to be a little bit aggressive when you play’.

(Frankie Interview Transcript)

The experiences presented by these participants expose that there may be rules of the game, but there are unspoken rules of violence:

‘In terms of how you react to the impact and how much you accept the impact is going to hurt you. But when its actually being done beyond the rules, so if an impact hurts you and then someone flops on you and uses their forearm and gives you quite a heft dig, then you know you have been tackled and you accept a good tackle’.

(Joseph Interview Transcript)

Here, Joseph presents a scenario whereby when violence is inflicted on him in line with the rules of the game and, in this instance, you accept the violence and move on without questioning it and reacting to it. It appears that if you are expertly dominated it doesn’t affect your masculine worth; it is an acceptable dent in your masculinity.

John and Alan (two homosexual participants), made clear reference to violence associated with rugby and the social standing (capital) that playing rugby can give you:

‘You know in Rugby they take harder hits and bigger falls and they don’t, you know, claim penalty or foul, and I think footballers are just weak, they’re ladylike.....so I would say the only real man’s sport in the world is rugby’.

(John Interview Transcript)

‘But if you played rugby you were quite a big thing. It was quite a big thing and yeah so it did affect, it helped my, it helped my socially’.

(Alan Interview Transcript)

Firstly, John’s reference to the physical attributes of taking ‘harder hits and bigger falls’ makes reference again to the fact that the physical side of a player matters in the interpretation of masculinity and the representation of the body. Ironically, John perceives football players to be ‘lady like’ because they are ‘weak’; the same term ‘lady like’ was used previously in this Chapter to refer to the visual presentation of a man with a six-pack. By feminising football players, he is marginalising the sport, while giving them a subordinate role in a sporting professional hierarchy. John even goes on to state ‘I would say the only real man’s sport in the world is rugby’.

This directly links to Alan’s personal experience of rugby in school, whereby, as a marginalised man (homosexual male), he found that through playing rugby he achieved social standing. It could be suggested that through the outward hyper-masculine social representation of rugby, he was able to hide amongst the ‘butchness’ of it, and pass as a heterosexual male (passing as heterosexual is

discussed in more detail in theme **(5.4.1.3) “Passing as Straight”: De-Emphasising Queer in Fear of Homophobia**), which will be discussed later.

To summarise, the use of the embodied verbal weapon, the voice, is a weapon that has lived experience and is able to provoke and escalate violence in contact team sports. Sportsmen are living the game through heightened verbal experiences that move into the physical realm of violence using feet and shoes, power and strength, to dominate and hurt other players. In addition, through legitimate and acceptable game play, Masculine Capital can be affected. However, if the game play is legitimate, the overall effect is minimal, suggesting that illegal violence and the need to provoke in team sports is desired. Rugby appears to be the main team sport that can provide social masculine credibility, and can hide the fear of being a subordinate male in sport.

### **5.3.1 Superordinate Theme: Performative Masculinities Embodied in Homosocial Environments**

This superordinate theme encompasses four subordinate themes, each considering the role of masculinity within homosocial environments or spaces. The narrative of these themes reflects the importance of masculine agency, heteronormative performativity, Masculine Capital and the discourse of sexuality in these sporting environments. These themes will now be discussed in turn with detailed commentary reflecting the analysis process and exposure of the data.

#### **5.3.1.1 Subordinate Theme: ‘Cock-Supremacy’ a New Tenet of Masculine Capital and the Homoerotic Gaze Embodied in the Locker Room Male Sex Role**

In opening this theme, it is important to expose the fact that Masculine Capital in sport sociology and Masculinity Theory has pre-existing tenets. To reiterate for clarity, these include ‘(1) no sissy stuff; (2) be a big wheel; (3) be a sturdy oak; and (4) give em hell’ (David and Brannon, 1976, p.12). De Visser *et al.* (2009, p.1049) also adds, ‘(1) Physical Prowess; (2) a lack of vanity; (3) sexuality and

(4) Alcohol use'. Therefore, as this subordinate theme develops it can be seen that Cock-Supremacy should be considered as a new tenet that can be interwoven into existing epistemologies of Masculine Capital.

It was evident throughout the analysis process that the embodied connection to the male penis had a definite impact on the amount of Masculine Capital credited to a 'well endowed individual'. In order to know who is well endowed or not, men are subject to voyeuristic scrutiny by other men, a form of homosocial misogyny. This process creates hierarchical structures amongst sporting men that promote and revere hegemonic male leaders.

To initiate this theme, Philip reflects on puberty, his physical development and his reasoning for looking at other men as a measuring tool of his own embodied masculine development:

'And as you start to develop, you kind of ....I think boys that age [Laughs], everybody checks everybody out anyway because they wanna see if they're normal compared to everyone else. Physically, do I look like them, or, you know, who's got the bigger dick. [laughs] It's a teenage obsession isn't it really? But I guess that it's done that way and it would be done overtly in a jokey way, certainly by the older boys, who'd joke about those things, as a kind of masculine thing, talking about the size of their cock, or their balls, or whatever, or the girlfriend that they'd shagged last night, and that's done in a very overt sort of way to show off'.

(Philip Interview Transcript)

It is of interest that Philip refers to the fact that as a teenage boy, he needed to know what a 'normal' body looked like, and through a young voyeuristic gaze he could judge his own stage of sexual development. The focus of his homosocial gaze was not on biceps or chest size, it was on penis size; and that humour was

the vehicle through which to discuss or expose the most endowed members in the locker room.

Through humour, a hegemonic representation of the male sex role is exposed through the prowess of their sexual exploits, which is directed at the degradation of women. Queering this statement simply reiterates this degradation of women in sport, and exposes a consistent disregard or existing institutionalised hegemonic culture within the male locker room.

To extend the discussion of the cock size, humour and misogyny further, Darwin elaborates on 'cock size' or being 'hung' as a tool to impress women while on a night out with teammates:

'There were two lads in particular that came in for grief. Not necessarily grief, but the banter was aimed at them for being well hung, I suppose. Like, you'd go out on a Saturday night and you'd sit-, you'd see them talking to a girl and then minutes later you'd see like three or four lad bundle over to them and sort of, "Oh, you know, he got a massive cock" and all this, and sort of some poor girl would be scared shitless at these three knob heads that have just descended on her'.

(Darwin Interview Transcript)

Considering the Queering of the penis, this example has a direct impact on the role of women. It could be stated that the discussion of the penis here represents power and dominance over women, within the biopolitic of the pornographic penis (Maddison, 2009). This anecdote shares the common notion that size matters to women as much as it does to men. The question that is significant to consider is whether men worry about the size of their penis more than women? Is the penis simply a symbolic representation of what men believe their masculinity should be?



It does however, highlight the ideology, that having a large cock, and through other men exposing this truth (or supposed truth) of one's cock size, inflates that person's real sense of Masculine Capital and hegemonic status within the group, they are aspiring for Cock-Supremacy. It could be considered that a group of men need a leader with a large cock to promote, and by exposing the 'truths' that he has a large penis, exposes the potential reality that they are all hegmonically masculine, and by proxy this act inflates all their Masculine Capitals. One large cock amongst a group of friends, acts as an all-encompassing, Masculine Capital embracer, with one hegemonic leader.

Joseph relays an example of cock size, team banter and nickname development, acknowledging that a sportsman's penis size can become a form a locker room gossip that extends beyond the locker room environment, where the gossip was initiated:

'And there was one guy in the team and it was a standing joke, he was well hung, he was a massive guy, and it became a standing joke in the team that this guy, who wasn't a particularly great rugby player, it was there more because he wanted to be part of the team, but he was accepted in the teams and it's an odd thing to describe to you....so then actually, other people connected with the club became aware of this, and it became almost a sniggering bar room thing, and family members of other team mates, and people connected with the club, all became aware of this guy and his, you know, his large cock'.

(Joseph Interview Transcript)

It is also interesting to reflect on the fact that Joseph felt that this rugby player with the large cock, 'who wasn't particularly a great rugby player', was accepted into the team because he really wanted to be part of the team.

Joseph continues to discuss the fact that this sportsman's large cock was potentially the reason he was accepted into the team:

'It almost became his acceptance into the team. And I often wonder if that wasn't how everyone accepted him, whether he.....he'd have probably been managed out of the team and left on the sidelines because he wasn't particularly adept at rugby. So there's really interesting one, I guess, in terms of perceptions'.

(Joseph Interview Transcript)

It could be suggested in this lived example, that men forgive other men's lack of sporting ability due to the size of their 'massive cock'; that by impressing other men through being well endowed, one is given a 'masculine Capital licence' to be less technically-able at their chosen sport. It is also food for thought that since Joseph suggests that if he weren't as well hung, 'he probably would have been managed out of the team'. It raises the questions, what size does your penis need to be so that you are not forgiven for any sporting ability failings? And how big is big?

As a consequence of the participants lived anecdotes highlighted so far; we have to reflect theoretically on the social significance of a large penis in the sporting environment. As previously noted, De Visser *et al.* (2009) postulated on the theory of Masculine Capital/insurance and suggested that 'physical prowess' (p.1049) is the first tenet of Masculine Capital. Nonetheless, De Visser *et al.* (2009) define 'physical prowess' as 'physical muscularity and strength', as key symbolic assets that men aspire to; the authors do not in any way refer to the penis or size of the penis as Masculine Capital qualities. Therefore at this juncture it should be postulated that this thesis would also like to contribute to the existing qualities of Masculine Capital, by suggesting that a 'large cock' should also be considered a tenet of Masculine Capital, and that it clearly plays a role in

hegemonic masculinity. For the sake of reference we can refer to this phenomena as 'cock-supremacy'.

Nonetheless, this thesis does not aim to assist in allowing hegemonic masculinities to reign within society, but to give marginalised or silenced identities visibility from a queer theoretical perspective. The penis is quintessentially male/masculine, and the question that should be developed in the discussion of this thesis is, how do you 'queer' cock? Clearly there is a binary between a large cock and a small cock, with the integrated concerns of the embodiment of cock and its role in assisting masculine superiority, and reinforcing dominance over men with smaller penises.

While developing this idea of cock binaries, and large cock discourse, Joseph discusses the implication of a small cock and a large body, which is not necessarily muscular:

'But there were guys in the team who took a certain amount of stick with perceived size of genitalia and if they were....with rugby players as well, quite often the more physical positions require people to be physically large, and quite often that was physically large through fat'.

(Joseph Interview Transcript)

Clearly there is a dichotomy presented here, between body size (mass) and the size of ones cock. Body size is dictated in this instance by either being fat (seen as a hegemonically negative) or muscular (seen as a hegemonically positive), with body types having preconceived correlating positive or negative cock sizes. It could be suggested that like large biceps, Cock-Supremacy is considered to be the must-have male embodied quality that impacts on being considered hegemonically male.

Joseph also raised the concept that it is not only body size that reflects on your cock size, but also your height:

'Then a kind of almost perception that if you're a smaller guy your genitals are smaller, and therefore, it's fair game t'mickey out of guys for that'.

(Joseph Interview Transcript)

As an aside within this theme thus far, it is evident that whether you have a large cock, a small cock, a large body, a fat body or a muscular body, men use humour and mockery as a tool to expose the truths surrounding embodied experiences of masculinity.

Darwin comments on his perception of the role of 'banter' in the locker room:

'The banter levels within football are quite high and sort of it was just a case of once you'd settled into the team you sort of expected to join in. If you didn't join in then you've sort of-, then you were deemed .....then you would sort of open yourself up for more banter, so sort of like self-preservation really'.

(Darwin Interview Transcript)

Darwin helps us to understand the relationship of 'banter' and masculinity, which seems to follow the principle that if you don't join in and mock other teammates, you will probably receive torments in return ten fold. Joseph comments on the role of penis mockery and the gossip that again extends the locker room climate:

'I don't think it ever massaged his ego. I don't think he ever ... In my view, anyway, he didn't ever use it as a kind of way to be accepted. However, it was probably quite nice for him that it was accepted. I guess one of the things that goes beyond the locker

room, really. And I think that it was probably nobody's business, was that a few guys who lived near him said he kind of lived with his mum and didn't have a particularly wide social circle, and so people started talking that, a guy endowed with what he's got will probably never use it. So this whole kind of forty year old virgin thing. And looking back, again, that's a very harsh, judgemental thing to have said, but that almost became part of his endearing charm that ... this guy had clearly got something quite special there, but either has no intention or no confidence, or whatever it might be, to actually go out and use it. No one ever said to him, you know, Bill, what's the story. But a few of the guys who knew him well enough made a judgement that he probably didn't ... didn't meet women, wasn't in touch with women. And that's a really harsh thing, I guess, looking back'.

(Joseph Interview Transcript)

In this instance, his Cock-Supremacy is at odds with his overall Masculine Capital. To be hegemonically masculine, he needs to be sleeping with women and using his penis; by discussing his penis size and his inability to use it, his sporting peers have relegated him to subordinate male status. His role has changed, there is a questioning of his sexuality, 'he probably didn't meet women, wasn't in touch with women', implying he was homosexual or asexual.

It could be seen as a method of 'outing' unspoken truths about men to other men to expose them as subordinates within micro-socio-locker-room-climate. Men in the locker room community can choose to raise one man's capital profile or lower it; it could be suggested that they subconsciously choose a hegemonic leader. The relationship between the male role in the locker room and Cock-Supremacy is a dialogue/discourse along a continuum, simply because as seen in these instances, it extends locker room discourse.

It is an inevitability that, if you engage in sport, you will end up in the locker room changing at one point or another, and/or having to get in the shower. Darwin discusses the pressure of getting undressed and showering:

‘A couple of us played for the seniors and it was strange how when you got into the seniors you were sort of given grief if you didn’t go and get into the showers afterwards. If you were the one to stay clothed, you’d either get grief for being sort of “Oh, he’s obviously got a small cock or whatever’.

(Darwin Interview Transcript)

Darwin exposes that some men do have a fear of de-clothing in front of other men, adding that if you don’t take off your clothes ‘he’s obviously got a small cock or whatever’. Extending insight into this quote, it is interesting to question what the ‘whatever’ means? Is Darwin referring to his body, his balls? This statement implies that further scrutiny of the masculine body occurs, and is not always openly stated.

Darwin continues by adding that men that do go in the shower and openly expose their body are always the ones with a large cock:

‘I don’t know whether it was to wind people up or if it was people’s genuine belief, but people that didn’t get in [in the shower] would get that grief, but the main ones that came in for it were the, like, lads that were massive sort of thing [laughs]’.

(Darwin Interview Transcript)

It could be argued that once the notoriety of one’s Cock-Supremacy trailblazer is established, other men/boys are there to judge and expose new men’s penis size, to ensure that their leader’s masculine Cock-Supremacy is kept.

Reflecting on his childhood, Alan reports that it wasn't for him all about the size of his penis but a fear of exposing his developing body too soon:

'I remember I got pubic hair quite early so I was really embarrassed. So I used to change in the toilets in the toilet cubicle. Whereas all the other boys, no hair on their bodies for swimming, and I was the one to change in the cubicle, and they said to me "Oh, why do you always change in the cubicle?" I said "I don't know, I just, you know, prefer it". And I was so embarrassed because I had hair'.

(Alan Interview Transcript)

Reading deeper into Alan's quote, it is evident that Alan is fearful and embarrassed of exposing his pubescent body, which unbeknownst to Alan at this stage of his life, would probably indicate significant masculine prowess. It is however evident that in the same instance Alan is fearful of homosocial environments such as the locker room, and as such changes in the toilet. Queering this action, it can be argued the social culture, constructs and behaviours have presented this locker room behaviour as the norm; why shouldn't Alan change in the toilet without it appearing different. John lived through the same experience and notes his strategies to avoid changing in the locker room:

'When I was in school we were forced to have showers together and I found an easy way around that. I threw my bag out the window and climbed out the window, and didn't shower. And then they cottoned onto that because a small number of us were doing that and they checked to see if we'd washed, or I discovered if I put my head under the tap and, you know, let some water drip on around me it made it look like I had, and, you know'.

(John Interview Transcript)

In this scenario showering in school and the monitoring of boys showering was a normative process. Of course coaches and teachers have a parental responsibility to make sure boys are hygienically sound while in school, perhaps underestimating, however, the homosocial stresses caused to some children who are not comfortable in a hegemonically homosocial environment? It could be argued that 'power' as parental dominance plays a role here, and that through the weaknesses of youth/childhood, and the socio-normative processes of showering and changing in the homosocial environment, anxieties develop and the need for a 'fight or flight' is experienced.

Analysing deeper from an idiographic perspective, two of the homosexual participants (Alan and John) reflect on their experiences (current and childhood) of the locker room environment. It could be considered that there is a fear of exposure, cock-exposure; a fear that their 'passing as heterosexual' within the locker room might be given away by their penis:

'But in boys school you don't really care because it's every day and it's a routine. So you all get into the shower, everyone is naked, blah, blah, blah. You don't get hard-ons. Now it's a different story I think for me'.

(Alan Interview Transcript)

Alan acknowledges that, as a child, homosocial showering was an every day activity, it is just what they did. It is with insight and sexual awakening and knowledge, that he would probably now have a 'hard-on' in the shower, observing naked men.

This aligns constructively to the role of the homoerotic voyeuristic gaze. Through the power of voyeurism and by observing other men's bodies, homosexual men can learn to understand their own sexuality and sexual awareness. John states:



'I think if you have any awareness of your own body, and by that you're also aware of other peoples bodies, and I suppose a gay teenager or someone starting to feel those things, first of all you don't talk about it anyway in those environments, so nobody would talk about it except in a joking, ridiculing way as being a poof or what ever, so you wouldn't open yourself up to that sort of ridicule really'.

(John Interview Transcript)

This illustration demonstrates that it is permissible to glance at other men's bodies, but you are not allowed to provide commentary on what you see. Discourse surrounding bodies appears to be a taboo or deviant here; it is social structures of acceptable behaviour playing a role here, a mute commentary on attraction of bodies. The performative role of the muted male deviant is only allowed to provide insight through humour and ridicule, and even then it is at the risk of homophobic recourse.

The locker room allowed a space for Alan during his formative years to observe male bodies, without the risk of his sexuality being exposed:

'In high school in your first year because your form has two showers and there's about 18 or 20 of you in a dorm, so two of you have to shower. There's no curtain in the showers in the locker room, so you just wait. And everyone's sitting on their lockers and everyone's showering. So eventually you get, I mean for me it wasn't sexual for the first two years. But then sort of in your third or fourth years like oh he is actually quite fit, you know, so you start maybe checking him out in the shower, no curtain'.

(Alan Interview Transcript)

It is evident that both Alan and John have experienced viewing other men in the locker room, and reference to 'humour' and 'checking them out' was a positive experience. Nonetheless both appeared to have a different perspective when they are gazed upon, or have the fear of being homoerotically gazed upon. Alan states:

'You didn't really care about everyone else being naked. I mean now I'm more aware of it[.....] I think if there are all gay guys in the changing rooms I can get changed and I don't care. If there's a straight guy I tend to cover up more if, if you know what I mean. So I will actually have my towel on and then put my undies on under the towel. Because if there's gay guys I'll strip off and they can look at me if they want, you know, but I always tend to turn my back to them rather. But then I find myself maybe looking down, the challenge'.

(Alan Interview Transcript)

Why does Alan feel differently about changing in front of heterosexual men compared to homosexual men? Reading into Alan's commentary from a Masculinity Theory perspective, it could be suggested that Alan is comfortable undressing around other homosexual men as they are Alan's peer group; they are at an even keel, culturally bound within a masculine hierarchical structure. The significance of his dilemma presents itself when changing in front of heterosexual men, it could be that he feels dominated; it could also be within a hegemonic masculine hierarchical structure Alan feels feminised and, as previously discussed, his cock might become aroused and expose the real truth of his anxiety. In actual fact, Alan exposes the truth, and it is his fear of 'looking down', implying that he might accidentally look at a heterosexual man's penis. It is the fear that if he looks, he would 'out' himself as homosexual and the role of playing straight in the locker room is now void; his desire to fulfil the homoerotic

gaze will 'out' him. Nonetheless, John feels an alternative pressure while changing in the locker room with other homosexual men:

'Even to this day I change in the corner and don't look around, whereas in the gym, because it's a gay gym, people are cruising each other in the gym, you know, checking each other out, you know, smiling, nodding, winking, passing telephone numbers, taking each other home'.

(John Interview Transcript)

John feels the social strains of the locker room when it fails to be a homosocial heteronormative environment, and it transcends into a homosexual-sexual environment. He doesn't look around and appears to be anxious that such a heteronormative setting has become an environment for picking up men. John's willingness to conform to pre-existing heteronormative constructed cultural and social ideals, provide an environment of angst for John, when these ideals and his own normative beliefs are challenged. John sheds some light on his angst:

'You know you shouldn't be in there with straight people because, you know, what If I see something I like. It's not fair on them'.

(John Interview Transcript)

Encapsulating many of John's insights on the locker room so far, there are multiple perspectives to contemplate. Firstly, as this body of work testifies, some heterosexual men do look at other heterosexual men, how else would they know who has a large cock, who has the biggest muscles, and who is the last in the shower.

Secondly, John has locker room values which allow the suggestion he should segregate homosexual men within the locker room environment, 'you shouldn't be in there with straight people'. It could be suggested that John incites

homophobiaphobia and fears dominance of homosexual men within the locker room, and with that, he desires the continuity of heteronormative locker room behaviours. Knowledge of this reaction to heteronormative conformity is similar to research carried out by Wellard (2006) in which he ethnographically observed a homosexual tennis league and noted that any forms of feminised homosexual expression were stamped out, and social and cultural heteronormative sporting values reinstalled, by the homosexual tennis chairmen. The homosexual community within this tennis league instilled the heteronormative norm as the homosexual behavioural norm. This could be taken to mean that homonormative is homosexual men performing heteronormative behaviours.

Thirdly, it appears irrational as a homosexual man that Alan states, 'It's not fair on them' (the heterosexual men), to be exposed to homosexual men within the locker room. Insinuating that there is unjustified act occurring by homosexual men observing heterosexual men in the locker room, or vice versa. This attitude implies that homosexual men cannot voyeuristically abstain from observing what they desire. John's concern that 'what if I see something I like?' suggests a lack of confidence in his own self-control, and a secondary fear of breaking his own self imposed locker room boundaries.

In concluding this subordinate theme, it can be noted that the locker room is a homosocial environment for men to engage in voyeuristic contemplation, and gauge through comparison of other men's physical development their own masculine status within a microclimate of hegemonic hierarchical paradigm. Through bodily comparison and understanding the lived experienced of embodied masculinity, men can see other men's cocks in the locker room and through humour and banter, the size of a man's cock can have a huge impact on his Masculine Capital. It can be noted that Cock-Supremacy is an additional tenet that can be added to the pre-existing qualities that construct the Masculine Capital epistemology.

It is through this acknowledgement of Cock-Supremacy that the exposure of locker room angst be illuminated. This multi-layered construct involves fear of changing in front of other men, fear of showering in front of other men, exposure of physical development in childhood, engagement in heteronormative homophobic banter, the homoerotic gaze, and the fear of sexual arousal.

Finally, the role of sexuality and the contrast between admiring a masculine body and the sexual attraction of the male form is evident in the locker room. There is the dysynergy between wanting to look at another man, but fearing his sexuality may cause offense and/or conflict. The socially constructed regimes of the locker room, suggest that ideals exist, but through muted observation and humour, it is feasible to gaze. Finally, through analysis, Alan illuminates the inappropriateness of heterosexual men and homosexual men changing in the same locker room, and strongly believes in social and cultural heteronormative values reigning in the locker room.

These locker room discourses present themselves from childhood through to adulthood, not depending on sexuality and/or sport; they represent the locker room as a fragile masculine building framing environment that can make or break a sportsman's locus within the hierarchical masculinity food chain.

#### **5.3.1.2 Subordinate Theme: Homosociality in the Locker Room**

This subordinate theme reflects upon the sociality of sportsmen in the locker room. It will consider how men (heterosexual and homosexual) interact and form relationships while engaging in a potential risk management strategy, either affirming or re-affirming their heteronormative masculine behaviour. The role of male grooming in the locker room will be highlighted, and the impact that this might have on their Masculine Capital will be discussed.

In the first instance Darwin talks about the impact of physical contact, he highlights an incident whereby he was 'bundled' by his coach and three other players:

'I remember sort of the first time you went in you'd get attacked by the manager and about three players. They'd just bundle you and it was sort, it was sort of a strange.... I don't know. I don't know whether it was to make people feel... I don't know why they did it, if it was to make people feel more comfortable or whether it was a sort of sign of "We're willing to get this close, but as you can see, its not arousing me so I am clearly not gay" sort of thing, whether it was a sort of deflection tactic, I'm not sure, or proving a point'.

(Darwin Interview Transcript)

It could be suggested that this initial anecdote reflects the importance of physical contact with other men. The 'bundle' is described as a jovial, playful activity to bond men with other men, although it could be argued that humour and jest such as this are the vehicles through which men consistently test masculinity. Reading into the purpose of the 'bundle' it is clear that it is a way of engaging in 'allowed' physical contact or 'getting close', and making sure or gauging that the other men/males partaking are not aroused; indicating by arousal who is homosexual and who is not. It is noteworthy to consider that the 'bundle' is a heteronormative activity, which allows boys and men to detect who is a threat to their Masculine Capital or not.

A 'bundle' appears to be a moderate form of homosocial interaction. Frankie focuses on more aggressive forms of homosocial bonding which appear to be more aggressive in nature:

'I haven't been involved in it but I've seen play fights, that type of thing, you know wrestles in the changing rooms. I've seen full blown

fights, you know during half time or full time, of people who aren't happy with the way things are going. I guess my experience of the locker rooms in football is, you know, you do get these characters who like to think they're a bit more masculine than others and they do then try and put that over by, you know, by being louder, or being more aggressive, by getting into people's faces, maybe by, you know, taking the mickey out of someone. I've not experienced it too much. I like to have a laugh and a joke but when it comes to like play fighting and play wrestling, I can't be bothered with all that. So I tend to-, you know, I'll maybe move away, start talking to someone else or something like that'.

(Frankie Interview Transcript)

Frankie notes that play fights and wrestling is a common occurrence in the locker room, he also comments on the escalation from play fighting and wrestling to 'full blown fights'. It is clear that this is more physically aggressive than the 'bundle' previously experienced by Darwin. It also seems apparent that there is the presence of a masculine dominant character within the locker room that acts 'by being louder or being more aggressive, by getting in people's faces, maybe by, you know taking the mickey out of someone'. The act of dominance reinforces a binary form, simply because, if someone is dominant or superior, someone has to be subordinate to the dominant. Frankie comments that he likes to get involved in the banter or joking around, but is not interested in the play fighting or wrestling. Reading into this, whilst Frankie likes to engage in the 'lighter' or 'softer' forms of male physical interaction, such as humour, it could be suggested that his reluctance to involve himself in the play fighting posits him as a subordinate male in the locker room. Darwin sheds light on an incident from his youth that contains multiple social connotations for masculinity building in the locker room:

'I dunno whether it was to exert masculinity or to just stitch me up. One sort of big example that jumps out, when I was with the junior

team, me and the other lad that played seniors went and got in the shower after one game, and while we were in there he says “Oh, I’ve forgot my towel. Can I just borrow yours quickly to dry off and then I’ll walk on.” “yeah, yeah, whatever.” So I stayed in the shower. Next thing I knew he’s cleared off with my towel, boxers, the lots. I said “Oh, bloody hell.” And the way that the corridor was set out, like, the changing rooms were one side, there was a corridor in the middle and then the showers were on the other side, so I knew I had to go across this corridor that was gonna be absolutely full of people. So I just sort of waited for a while, thinking “Oh well, either everybody’s gonna go, or worst case everyone’s gonna go and I can nip across, or my dad’s eventually gonna think ‘He’s still in that bloody shower,’ and then realise my towel’s not there and bring it. But then the next thing, one of the women’s team girls got bundled through the door, then like sort of then came the camera phones, etc., and then at the finish still had to walk back to the changing rooms. [Laughs] I trundled back. It was sort of-; it was quite amusing really at the time [Laughs]’.

(Darwin Interview Transcript)

In essence this experience exposes the potential stresses of homosocial environments. Firstly, Darwin is showering naked with another man, secondly this other man removes his towel, exposing and allowing Darwin to be totally naked. Thirdly, throwing a woman into the shower room while he is naked infers that Darwin should or could engage in a sexual act, and emphasises the misogyny of women as sexual objects for the heterosexual man. Reading into this horseplay from a different perspective, it could be suggested that his friend was trying to emasculate him, leaving him naked, exposing his body and his cock-capital (as previously discussed). It could also insinuate that if Darwin doesn’t sexually engage with this girl he could be exposed as homosexual, as sex with a woman is the ultimate heteronormative hegemonic act. The fact that the Darwin’s



experience was saved on camera for all to see documents the experience in time for all to see; it goes beyond anecdotal to cemented in picture. Relating to masculinity theory, it would be suggested that Darwin's friend is the hegemonic male in their relationship, and Darwin is a subordinate, climbing up the hierarchy.

Frankie discusses a slightly different homosocial bonding experience, after a serious accident during a football match that left him in hospital:

'So I was only 17, very young. So the people in the team weren't really my closest friends. They weren't people I kind of-, I socialised with at-, kind of at the time. I think they were angry at what happened. I-, like I said, I don't really remember it too well but I know they weren't very happy with the guy. I know there was a bit of trouble. I think if anything, even if you don't know someone too well, if someone injures one of your teammates, I think you have a sense of loyalty towards them and you're naturally going to get angry particularly if it's a bad injury. So, yes, I don't think they were too happy. Some visited me in hospital the next day. Three came and visited me, probably the guys I knew the best, with a porno mag, which was ridiculous, but yes'.

(Frankie Interview Transcript)

There are two clear distinct messages that are existent from the act of giving a pornographic magazine as a gift; firstly, it is a way of confirming heterosexuality, implying 'you are one of us', we are here for you if you are heterosexual; secondly it compounds the boys as a fraternity and unit through which sport has joined them. The visit to their friend in hospital exposes their sensitive side that they do care about their teammate. By giving the pornographic magazine to their friend, they have used humour again as a diversion tactic to hide the fact that caring maybe perceived as feminine or homosexual act.

For some participants homosocial interaction was about finding like-minded people, those that feared or disliked sports:

'Yeah there were-, there was this one guy. We became pretty good friends and he was exactly like me, he wanted to play piano. He didn't really want to play sport. We used to run....because they used to wake us up early in the morning in boarding school. ....so he was like my friend to go to "oh" and I knew he was gay, I mean he never came out when I was at school. He was like me, we used to go, ...we'd play together, we were best friends. And then the other gay guys in the school started to know us, so we sort of all got...we had our own group. The gays, you know, the gays in school'.

(Alan Interview Transcript)

Alan's experience is about bonding with other homosexual boys at school (even if at that time they were not out), it was about finding like-minded people to support and engage with, that have the same experiences and feelings. It is evident that Alan and his friends were labelled, they were marginalised, and they were 'the gays'. It is interesting that labelling men/boys in this way is to categorise them, put them in a box so that the 'normal' is safe from the deviants, and that way we all know what is what. Or do we? Joseph reflects again on the homosocial activity of showering:

'It would be a case of somebody would walk in last and it would be a case of ... of that. I was aware of a few times where, for whatever reason, somebody wasn't particularly aroused, but they appeared to be aroused, so it would be a case of a few of the guys would be like, oh, you're probably getting turned on looking at me'.

(Joseph Interview Transcript)

It is interesting to question the role of appearance and actuality in this narrative, and the erect penis and the fear of homosexuality. As previously discussed in this body of work, the erection of the penis is a sure give away of homosexuality, it is clear most men fear this happening in the locker room showers. Nonetheless, for one of the homosexual research participants the interaction within the homosocial locker room environment was enough to initiate a sexual relationship:

‘But actually from this whole thing, this one guy, and I – a straight guy he is straight now, we actually ended up having a relationship at.... at school in boarding school, from all this, because he started fancying me. You know and this is from the lockers, seeing me in the shower I suppose. And I had no clue, and he was the one who approached me, you know, just one day in school’.

(Alan Interview Transcript)

It could be suggested that the locker room is a homosocial environment through which homosexual men can go beyond friendship and experience sexual relationships. It could be argued that if Alan’s partner had never seen him in this environment their relationship might never have commenced. Nonetheless, there are appropriate boundaries that should be appreciated, John elaborates:

‘I had a guy follow me into the shower and into the same cubical as me and I freaked out. I screamed bloody murder. I was like “fuck off, fuck off”. Couldn’t cope with that’.

(John Interview Transcript)

John highlights the issue that even if two men are homosexual in a homosocial environment it does not infer that both men wish to partake in sexual relations. The homosocial locker room and its interpretive signifiers and codes of practice, are there to be learnt and understood.

The role of feminising men in the locker room seems to have developed over recent times, and men are currently embracing more metrosexual grooming routines. Through idiographic examples this theme will now expose the shifting boundaries of homosocial public grooming practices. This next idiographic example will be an extended example of discourse from of Frankie interview transcript:

'I guess times have changed a little bit, you know. You now see men in showers and they've got shampoos and conditioners and body washes and face washes and moisturisers and gels and hair straighteners and hair dryers and-, you know, so I think-, yes, I think there is-, you know, people want to appear kind of masculine and-, I think that is-, it is important in football definitely.

**Interviewer: What do you mean by there's all these hair straighteners and shampoos and-, what do you think that's implying?**

Well, I think when I was a lot-, you know, maybe ten years ago-, so I'd just started playing men's football. You didn't really see that sort of thing in a changing room but, you know, I think with times that are changing products, you know, are more readily available and, you know, advertising geared towards men as well, you know. I think men are less frightened to use those products in front of other men. I think, you know, it's more commonplace whereas before if I was to moisturise I'd go into the toilet to moisturise because I didn't want anyone to see me doing it whereas now I quite readily moisturise and share my moisturiser with other men as well.

**What was your fear about moisturising?**

It wasn't just moisturising. I guess, you know, when you're 17/18 and you're in a room full of, you know, fully grown adult men and it's not something you see them doing I guess maybe to avoid having the mickey taken or to avoid being, you know, the subject of a bit of banter, you know, you-, I would just shirk away and do it in the privacy of the toilet.

**So were you scared of being labelled as gay? Was that-, do you think the association-**

Oh, no, not being labelled as gay, not at all. It was just-, I-, it's difficult to say really. I think it was more a case of I didn't want to do anything-, you know, I wanted to appear normal to these guys and, you know, I guess that was probably why I did it, maybe to avoid the teasing because, you know, when I was young, I maybe wasn't so-, I might have maybe taken it a bit more personally than I do now. So, yes, it was just-

**Were there other instances in the locker room where you think your masculinity was ridiculed at all?**

Oh, definitely, yes. I mean thinking back at the teams I played for, I was certainly one of the first-, I used to have longer hair, a big mullet style hair cut. So I was one of the first to have hair straighteners in the changing rooms and a hair dryer and I used to get teased all the time for that, my moisturisers, my hand wash, my lipsil. Yes. I've been teased plenty of times but it's all friendly, you know. It's nothing I take personally'.

(Frankie Interview Transcript)

Frankie's discourse exposes multiple factors regarding male grooming within the homosocial locker room environment. First it is important to consider that Frankie likes to use all these products, such as face creams and showers gels 'to appear kind of masculine'. Reading into this statement, it gives the impression that Frankie isn't totally certain that this new grooming regime makes him masculine, it makes him 'kind of masculine' inferring he is not completely hegemonic through engaging in this newly masculine enhancing routine. Clearly Frankie was fearful of exposing his pleasure in caring for himself by locking himself in the toilet. He states he wasn't fearful of being labelled gay, but of teasing and banter, and ultimately he wanted to appear 'normal'. It is the fear of being labelled anything other than normal, which appears to provoke Frankie into alternative locker room behaviours.

Additionally, as previously discussed, it is the role of humour, 'mickey taking', 'banter' and 'teasing' that is pivotal in exposing truths about men to other men, about men; it appears to be the method that is at the crux of male inter-social interaction, regardless of sexuality, social background or sport.

Finally, it is interesting that Frankie notes an increase in the uptake of a new metrosexual routine among men in the locker room. The continuum of male grooming, and acceptance in the homosocial environment, continues to change and evolve.

Darwin exposes the internal dichotomy he feels about embracing a more metrosexual grooming routine:

'I can sort of-, I'd probably say I was somewhere in between in the fact that like I can sort of be one of the lads, like sort of if they wanna go out and drink god know how many pints of lager I'll join in and have a laugh with them, but at the same time do sort of things that would be deemed as quite feminine and quite girly like have a

sunbed, fake tan, etc., sort of daft hair cut, dye the hair, etc. I think it's just because things like the dying of the hair or even like the fake tan are things that are sort of seen as this is what girls do to attract the males sort of thing. It's the view in sort of hyper-masculine male, sort of ... I've got, what, four or five colours in my hair at the minute sort of thing. I just sort of like to be a bit different [laughs] with that. But it's just sort of seen as that's what women do. Women dye their hair, sort of women like to essentially look after themselves [Laughs]'.

(Darwin Interview Transcript)

It is evident that Darwin feels at odds with his desire to embrace a more feminine grooming routine. He makes it clear that he wants to be one of the lads, he wants to get drunk and drink larger, however, it is his acceptance of what he perceives as a feminine routine, which will alter his community of friends to what is deemed as masculine or not. It could be postulated that if he is hegemonically masculine amongst his sporting peers, and has enough Masculine Capital to his name, engaging in male grooming routine such as this could reduce some Masculine Capital, but not enough to deem him a subordinate male. Darwin views it as 'hyper-masculine', his peers would need to be interviewed to postulate any further.

In summary, this theme considers the role of social and physical contact with other men in a homosocial environment. The role of physical contact and humour appear to be social bonding tools for men to be able to interact and assist in developing distinct masculine hierarchies. Through the need to 'bundle', some men are highlighted as more feminine or weaker individuals, since they have a desire not to interact with the other boys/men in this way. The discourses expose the use of masculine-building incidents, such as the girl being thrown into the locker room and the gifting a pornographic magazine in the hospital, as a method of reaffirming heterosexuality and building Masculine Capital in safe homosocial

environments. It is also interesting to conclude on the fact that some homosexual participants found like-minded individuals to share the sporting experiences with, as well as finding sexual relationships in the locker room. Through embracing formerly feminine grooming routines in the locker room, the role of homosocial grooming has expanded and is now experienced by other men, the former notion of homophobia having decreased.

In conclusion, men in homosocial environments need to have enough Masculine Capital to be excused for indulging or excusing themselves from locker room politics, e.g. grooming, banter, mickey taking, otherwise doubt will be cast, and fear of homosexuality or feminisation insinuated.

#### **5.3.1.3 Subordinate Theme: “Passing as Straight”: De-Emphasising Queer in Fear of Homophobia**

‘Passing as straight’ is the male role of acting/performing in a traditional hegemonic heterosexual fashion. The act of ‘passing as’ was in response to fear of homophobia and being outed in sport. This performative role appeared to be a common experience encountered by all the homosexual participants. Analysing the participants discourse for this study there appears to be a common disdain or dislike for ‘camp’ or ‘effeminate’ men in sport, and that butch or heteronormative performativity appears to be the solution to homophobic-free living. Therefore the role of de-emphasising feminised queer behaviour was adopted by many of the homosexual participants to appear heterosexual or butch. This duality between butch and camp will be called the butch/camp binary, and through queering this binary it will become evident that homophobia is embedded within as a result, but also allowing those subordinate masculinities to have a voice. As is already known, when binary order is present, subordinate factions exist, and in this subordinate theme ‘camp’ masculinities are the illuminated subordinate. The paradigm of homophobia embedded in butch/camp binary will also be deconstructed.



This subordinate theme focuses mainly on the experiences expressed by the homosexual participants, however some thematic examples are also those of heterosexual participants.

De-emphasising feminised or camp behaviour seemed to be a common experience encountered all by the homosexual participants in this study. By adopting heteronormative practices and identifying 'straight' as a socio-positive performative ideal, the participants felt they had achieved a raised level of homosexual Masculine Capital kudos.

John is at no odds with trying to pass as heterosexual:

'I like to pass as straight. I don't like, you know, I think these skinny guys just associate that with campness and weakness, whereas if someone's been to the gym you think they're strong, they're tough, they're you know, something that other men might look up to, so that sort of gives you that sort of hyper-masculinity'.

(John Interview Transcript)

Firstly, it is significant to note the phenomenological linguistic terminology associated with John's lived experience of 'passing as straight'; John used words like 'strong' and 'tough' to define masculinity, clearly associated with hegemonic masculinity, in addition this mirrors tenets accepted within social theory of Masculine Capital. In the butch/camp binary, John refers to camp men with evident disdain, describing them as 'skinny' and 'weak', indicating that these men are less worthy masculine individuals. John wants to be admired, and embody the heteronormative hegemonic hypermasculine mesomorphic male. Ultimately in performing this way, John can be perceived as straight by his immediate peers, avoiding ridicule and the potential fear of being outed, and of being less valued as a sportsman. John gives deeper insight into what initiated his desire to 'pass as straight':

'Some people were weak, some people were smart and others were gay, because from-, even when I started secondary school I knew that I was gay, so it was everything I did I had to try and....any camp mannerisms, obliterate them as quickly as possible so people couldn't pick up on them because your life would have been hell'.

(John Interview Transcript)

It can be noted that John felt that school was the reason for trying to 'obliterate' any 'camp mannerisms', and being openly homosexual and camp his 'life would have been hell'. We can presume from this that John was in fear of homophobic bullying and learnt early on to perform traditional heteronormative stereotypes.

John now seems to have gained a sense of pride in 'appearing' to be heterosexual:

'I seem to be doing the same thing to trick people into thinking "Aw, he's straight" and, you know, the girls from work don't believe that I'm gay until they meet a partner and they're like "Is that really true?'

(John Interview Transcript)

Philip and John also reflect on the impact school had on them and their abilities to perform 'straight'. John remembers using his developing muscles as a form of playground credit, de-emphasising any inclination that he was homosexual:

'Some of the hard cases wanted to be like muscle boys and wanted to be seen as being hard and they used to ask me about, well, how can I do this? How can I get bigger arms? Because they assumed that maybe I knew, and I didn't because I just did gymnastics

[laughs] so I didn't have much knowledge on kind of other ways of building your body'.

(Philip Interview Transcript)

It is clear to see that Philip was trying to impress the other teenagers with physical prowess, as discussed in this body of work's other Superordinate Theme **(Embodied Unrest of the 'Bulked' Torso: Muscle Ideology and Performative Violence, (5.2.1))**. By presenting physically developed masculine attributes, John was able to deflect suspicion of homosexuality, potentially through fear of a homophobic response. In performing this way, not only was he admired and revered, he was also provided with heterosexual 'hard cases' to be complicit in his own façade and provide him with masculine protection. Alan talks about his attempt to be masculine:

'Well, I tried to be masculine. You know, you try, because you go to boarding school and you're with all these boys, you know. Everyone is like "Oh I'm gonna play rugby" so you try, you know, you try and fit in'.

(Alan Interview Transcript)

Alan used rugby, which has previously been termed as a hypermasculine sport due to its rough physical nature, to de-emphasise his homosexuality. Alan feels that, by partaking in rugby, he will be masculine and will naturally be able to 'fit in'; he wants to be heteronormal.

Chad supports this idea of partaking in sport as 'performed' heterosexuality:

'I think in some ways it was to like validate, to erm, my masculinity. Sports and the ability to play sports, and erm, and who enjoyed playing sports, that became something that was easy for me to use as a way of signalling to... to friends and family and all these

anyone else that erm to assert my masculinity and as a result of asserting my masculinity not having people question my sexuality’.

(Chad Interview Transcript)

Through interpretation it is postulated that Chad was looking to ‘pass as straight’, and looking for masculine validation from his family and friends. It could be that through the use of sport as a validation tool, Chad can signify ‘butchness’ and not have people question his sexuality. Queering Chad’s performative behaviour, he is adhering and reinforcing historical cultural structures of masculinity. If queered at this point his sexuality is homosexual, his performance is perceived as butch, but if we ignore his sexuality, he is performing a temporal existence of masculinity trapped in his mind from childhood.

It is interesting to note that both Alan and Chad in the last few quotes have used ‘masculine’ and ‘straight’ interchangeably. Chad gives some indication as to why:

‘I don’t think it’s straight, I think its masculine. But erm, yeah I think for a lot of gay guys being masculine as a gay guy is a really big turn-on. You know, and anything that a guy does that is considered feminine, you know is a huge turn-off. But then you see these, you know you meet these big guys who go the gym 6 times a week and they look you know like the stereotypical you know. You know and then, then they are all over the place and they’re calling people ‘bitches and you know, and they’re you know wrist-slapping their friends and you know, mincing about and you know it’s like ‘well you know, that’s cool too’. But why have you gone to all this trouble to build up this exterior. That, that doesn’t match your personality, like. It drives me bonkers’.

(Chad Interview Transcript)

Chad clearly believes that 'masculine' is performing the heteronormative male sex role, and anything that is considered feminine or camp is not part of that role. Chad opens up the discussion of homosexual men that visually perform and present their embodied physicality as heterosexual in the gym, even when their personalities and personas represent that of femininity. He comments 'they're calling people bitches and you know, and they're you know wrist-slapping their friends and you know, mincing about and you know it's like 'well you know, that's cool too'. But why have you gone to all this trouble to build up this exterior. That, that doesn't match your personality, like. It drives me bonkers'. Gaining deeper insight into Chad's views, it could be that Chad cannot deal with the apposition of performed femininity or open homosexuality, and represented/constructed masculinity, in the same embodied person. It challenges his own institutionalised constructed rules around the performative heteronormative qualities as a homosexual man.

It could also be suggested that Chad is experiencing homophobia, directed in this example towards the dislike of feminine enacted qualities outwardly presented by said gay men. Homophobia allows hierarchies within the homosexual community to be brought to the fore, indicating that homosexual men that are more feminine, appear to be at odds with the 'butch' crowd, representing that feminine homosexual men are seen as subordinates within the homosexual sporting community. Subordinate groups always exist when binary order comes to the fore and a political power struggle ensues. 'Butch' appears to preoccupy Chad; he highlights masculine qualities he found attractive in other sporting men:

'Interestingly actually the guy that I was dating at the time, that was one of the first things that he registered and found attractive about me, was the fact that he was carrying around this tennis racquet to classes, 'oh this guy's clearly sporty and straight'.

(Chad Interview Transcript)

It is evident that Chad has found another homosexual sporting man, who has used sport or the image of 'butch' to deflect the aura of homosexuality. The performativity of 'acting straight' or 'passing as', by holding a tennis racquet, seems a rather simplistic method of attracting other men. Nonetheless, through Chad noticing this guy, he was able to find a like-minded de-emphasiser of queer.

Chad gives another enlightening statement:

'The thing that ultimately defines you as masculine is that you like to have sex with women, and bond with women instead of men'.

(Chad Interview Transcript)

Again, Chad uses the term 'masculine' to imply heterosexual, but what is most interesting here is that Chad as a homosexual man, will never be able to fulfil his definition of 'masculine', simply because he doesn't sleep with women. It could be argued that in Chad's idiographic case, he will never be able to fulfil his notion of masculinity or heterosexuality; leaving himself continually invalidated by his family and friends. Queering Chad's statement forces us to consider his understanding of shared lifestyles, and the institutionalised values he holds of women and their relationship to men. It also questions what is at the essence of masculinity and homosexuality; if masculinity is bonding with women, then as a homosexual man whom do you bond with? If it is men bonding with men, Chad will never be able to fulfil his own criteria of masculinity and be a satisfied homosexual. Perhaps under the queer guise it should be known as queered-masculinity. Through all the efforts of 'passing as straight', ultimately all the homosexual men interviewed were in fear of homophobia:

'And when you're on a train and stuff, you don't want to feel that people know your sexuality because you think of gay bashing and this, that and the other, so being hyper-masculine is a good way of

covering up what some people would say a flaw, you know, a genetic flaw being gay'.

(John Interview Transcript)

John supports the consensus that hyper-masculine is a heterosexual quality and that by performing this male role some attempted homophobic violence will and can be avoided or de-emphasised. Nonetheless, a point to note is that John felt homosexuality was a 'genetic flaw'. Taking a deeper analysis of this statement, the repercussion is that homosexual men will always be at odds with the 'biologically normal', that homosexual men's genetic makeup is not a positive life to live, but a socio-genetic negative one. It also suggests that homosexual men are biologically subordinate to biologically heterosexual men. Here we are considering sexuality from the microbiological perspective, that from the picogrammes of genes that create us as humans, it constructs and maps a future of our lives that is out of our socio-genetic control. Being at odds with 'normal' is clearly what de-emphasising queer is all about, however, being at odds, develops and enhances the role of homophobia.

Through the interpretation and queering of the data post-analysis, three main socially constructed tenets of homophobia were illuminated. These include, violence and homophobia, homophobia towards feminised masculinities and internalised self-hatred as homophobia. These homophobia social constructs will now be deconstructed in turn.

John talks about the obliteration of his camp qualities in fear of homophobic violence in school:

'Any camp mannerisms, obliterate them as quickly as possible so people couldn't pick up on them because your life would have been hell. I went to a very rough school, a very violent school. People

got knifed and bricks dropped on their head and it was quite-... it was a very abusive school’.

(John Interview Transcript)

It is a natural response that any child going to school under these circumstances would be fearful, one would encourage de-emphasising qualities that may appear queer. Alan exposes an act of homophobic violence, which occurred more recently:

‘I was walking home and someone threw a coin at me from a car, because of the way I walked, because I was obviously listening to some Beyoncé song, so I’m walking like a little gay boy along the road. And I, you know, I always used to want to change the way I walked’.

(Alan Interview Transcript)

There is a sense here that Alan feels like he almost deserved to be hit by this coin. By degrading himself as ‘a little gayboy’, he suggests that this act was justified, in addition it appeared this fear and violence constantly encouraged Alan to change. The question is, in reality, does Alan have to change? De-emphasising queer is only a socio-negative reaction to homosexuality and feminised mannerisms. Alan adds the socio-cultural role of homophobic violence:

‘In South Africa, Zimbabwe is still back in the stone age because they believe homosexuality is illegal and you get into prison ... you go into prison for life, you’re gonna get killed. They just kill you in prison anyway’.

(Alan Interview Transcript)

Clearly a fear of homophobic violence, and the fear of death, is a strong reasoning behind Alan’s desire to ‘pass as straight’. It could be interpreted that here is the thematic image of hopelessness about Alan’s discourse regarding



homosexuality in South Africa. Phenomenologically, the analysis leads Alan along a pathway, which linguistically suggests illegal-prison-killed equals homosexuality, allowing the onset of what could be stated as the mind-set of 'self-hatred'.

Alan continues:

'The Zimbabweans are very homophobic so you couldn't openly be gay. So for me the fitness thing was actually a lifesaver because I was-, I could be openly gay at work. Unfortunately, at home I couldn't because I'm from a really Afrikaans family. So work was the place, in the gym, where I was gay, and all the straight trainers were fine with me. And I was me and they respected me for my teaching ability, and I could jump just as high as the straight guy next to me, so there you go'.

(Alan Interview Transcript)

We have to consider the internal struggle that Alan must have dealt with contending with heteronormative sociocultural constraints, as well as the fear of death or imprisonment, while fighting to perform heteronormative embodied signifiers for his family, which, in addition to his above commentary, must have contributed to an onset of self-hatred. Alan had relief in the gym environment where he worked, it appeared that Alan could behave as the homosexual man he wished to be in a homofriendly microclimate differently structured to the outside lived world. Though safe from sexuality commentary, Alan still felt that he had to compete physically with the 'straight' guys around him, which highlights the continual flux and unstableness of sexuality and masculinity in homosocial environments. Once one matter is resolved to provide a moment of satisfaction, another issue comes to the fore.

Family and conformity in fear of homophobia was experienced by Frankie:

‘My brother used to say to me “ you are not allowed to hang around with Leroy because he’s going to make you, you know, you’re going to get a bad name because you two are gays, you’re going to be, you know”’.

(Frankie Interview Transcript)

It is interesting that homosexuality in this context, implies that if you socialise with a homosexual, you will be labelled a homosexual. It is evident here that homosexuality has negative connotations for Frankie’s brother, informing him that he will ‘get a bad name’, and perhaps it can be read that Frankie’s brother was fearful that he would be labelled as a homosexual too.

Darwin - a heterosexual sportsman - exposes the impact of befriending a homosexual football player:

‘There was one lad at school, a gay lad at school that a few of us were friends with, and you would get the odd ... There was particularly one lad would give grief to the lads that were friends with him. If they’d gone out on a Saturday night and he’d gone with them, they’d automatically get grief for hanging out with the gay lad, sort of the insinuation that because he was gay and they were friends with him, they were gay sort of thing. I think it was generally a sort of doesn’t really matter, he’s a nice enough guy. [Laughs] He’s a nice lad. It sort of changed our opinion of the guy that we were playing with to sort of, rather than he’s trying to get us to think negatively of the other guy, it made us think more negatively about him for being essentially a bigoted idiot’.

(Darwin Interview Transcript)

Darwin’s narrative supports the feelings lived by Frankie and his brother, if a group of men in sports are friends with a homosexual man, then the rest of the

group are also labelled homosexual. Darwin highlights a changing view of homosexuality, acknowledging the idea that they were still friends with the man, but felt that the homophobic insinuations were those of a 'bigoted idiot', demonstrating the shifting perspective of temporality and queered sexuality.

Homophobia towards feminised masculinities (a fear of effeminate or other homosexual men) appears throughout the homosexual participants' discourses. To lay the foundations for this paradigm, it could be suggested that the homophobia here deals with the fact that homosexuality, and the desire of masculinity and that of heteronormativity in sport, opens up a distinct conflict between embodiment, performativity, desire, sexuality and fear of feminised masculinities.

John as homosexual body builder gives us some initial insight:

'I had a very bleak outlook and wouldn't tolerate anyone that had any camp mannerisms. I wouldn't entertain them to speak to. I would be rude and-, because I was projecting what I was taught. I'm unlearning those things, and actually-, actually learning to accept and tolerate camp gay people has been a positive role and move for me. And I wouldn't say I've moved into a bubble, but I've moved into a safer space and a space where people are more understanding'.

(John Interview Transcript)

Gaining insight from John's interview, it can be noted that he presents a lack of tolerance and general dislike for camp mannered men; it is also significant that he states 'I wouldn't entertain them to talk to'. Similar to Frankie and his brother, whereby homosexual men are indoctrinated into accepting or rejecting behaviour associated with homosexuality or femininity. John talks about 'unlearning' and accepting gay people for who they are, that through being in a safer environment

(a less homophobic one) people, including himself can be more understanding and accepting of 'camp' homosexuals. Queering masculinities here, it could be argued that there are two diverging then converging issues here; a the continuum of altering sexuality which converges with culturally learned behaviours towards homosexual men. Chad exposes his conflict between embodying masculinity, performing masculinity and its conflict with camp representation of homosexuality:

'Cos there is quite a common trend, I don't know if you notice it these days there's quite a lot of blokes like in the gay community that've got a bit of a mince but they also then wear like G-Star boots and then tuck them in at the back and they go. It doesn't quite work for me'.

(Chad Interview Transcript)

It is interesting that Chad scrutinises the juxtaposition between boots, walking and the fact that 'mincing... doesn't quite work' for him. This dislike towards feminised socially-performed masculinities, and Chad's attitude towards other gay men, extends the locker room, which in turn it extends the sporting environment. Embodied within gay culture, that some homosexual men have found embodied balance between their femininity, masculinity and performativity is something that seems to agitate Chad. Chad discusses the use of homophobic feminised language in the locker room of a gay squash team:

'I think, I think that in, err in a maybe more err, like err comforting way or in a more like poking-fun at camp guys opposed to making-fun sort of way the same terms get used in a straight league. 'Stop being a queen' you know this or that or like, it still happens'.

(Chad Interview Transcript)

It is interesting that Chad interprets heteronormative learnt values, and transposes them onto the homosexual locker room setting, playing the heteronormative male role within a homosexual context. Using humour (again), this camp tennis player is mocked for being a 'queen', indicating that he is over dramatic and performs feminised behaviours; it could be explored that by treating a team mate this way, they are constructing a masculine hierarchy.

Chad extends his use of feminised terminology to express the significance between a camp sportsman and his ability to play:

'That depends a lot on the quality of their squash [laughs]. There's one guy who was like you know a beautiful, beautiful squash player and sometimes he could be you know really a princess. But erm he plays beautiful squash and he you know I think somehow he's able to, he's allowed to be more camp or feminine or whatever just because he performs on the court well, and I think that there are guys who are more feminine on the team who are not good players who erm get marginalised as a result of that sure'.

(Chad Interview Transcript)

Once again in this framework the said sportsman is feminised by being referred to as a 'princess'. However, what is striking here is the fact that if he has good sporting ability, the team forgives his feminine performative traits. In line with Masculine Capital this discourse suggests it doesn't matter how 'camp' this man is, since he embodies other Masculine Capital tenets e.g. he embodies 'physical prowess' but also embodies 'sissy stuff', it could be postulated that each of the tenets counteract each other and represents them as void. Alternatively, if a squash player is overly camp and had poor ability in squash he would have been 'marginalised as a result of that sure'. It could be suggested this is opposite to Cock-Supremacy, whereby if you have good sporting ability, you are forgiven for

being overtly feminine in sport. This could be referred to as Sporting-Camp-Capital, that through sporting ability a camp homosexual man is forgiven non-heteronormative performance qualities. Joseph contributes a similar example that supports this concept of Sporting-Camp-Capital:

‘I was aware that two of the guys were gay. And they were quite happy that people knew that, and didn’t worry if people judged them on that. They were actually just accepted because they were bloody good footballers. And maybe there’s something in that. If they’d been bloody bad footballers, then maybe that might have been an issue. But actually, the two camp guys I’m thinking of now, no, they were ... they kind of stood their own and didn’t really take any shit. And it was just an accepted thing. And they’d be jibed for it, and I guess it was between them and whoever jibed them whether it was an issue to them, but I was never aware of them ever being offended or taking offence or feeling that it was unfair that the jokes were kind of on them, I suppose’.

(Joseph Interview Transcript)

From an abstract idiographic perspective, it was perceived through the analysis that Alan embodies the notion of internalised self-hatred as homophobia. It is evident throughout this body of work that Alan refers to himself in a self-degrading manner; it appears that through internal homophobic degradation, he is able to deal with his sexuality. Previous discourse provided by Alan in this thesis supports this constructed belief of self-hatred, and it can be suggested that, socioculturally, Alan is a product of a heteronormative homophobic South African culture. In this idiographic snapshot from Alan’s interview transcript, it appears that his family have little regard for his chosen career, while it provides an illumination on their constructs of homosexuality:

'You know I would have thought that ... I mean now especially now that I've got that job as a tutor, that my ... my mum would be quite impressed because now it's all about knowing I am the best, I become like a teacher and it is a sport you know.....And for her it's just I was a little gay dancing in class. So I haven't really gained any sort of respect you would say, like after all these years and now I've become sort of high up in my ... in my profession, she hasn't really accepted it cos of how I suppose she perceives, because they perceive.....well I'm a bit disappointed because I would have thought that, you know, your parents are supposed to be proud of you rather. And so that's why I'm not really close to my parents. So it has affected me in that aspect. And I find myself more friendly with people in my classes than with my parents, which sounds weird, cos they ... they sort of think, oh you know, they see me, oh he's the instructor, he's, you know, he's done well for himself or well they, you know they might ... they might respect me for what I do'.

(Alan Interview Transcript)

This insight into Alan's views of his career, and his relationship with his parents, appears to be at the crux of his self-loathing. The fact that he describes himself as 'little', suggests that he sees himself as nothing, unseen. It also provides a direct correlation to previous themes discussed whereby bigger bulked men always seem to be revered, and take a more significant placing in society.

Reflecting on the concept of 'passing as straight' and homophobia in sport, Frankie gives some insight regarding homosexuality and masculinity that might enlighten this paradigm:

'I don't think homosexuality and masculinity in the past have always been linked together especially-, particularly as a young man, you

know, growing up, I wouldn't have linked homosexuality to masculinity but, you know, as I grew up and, you know, I got homosexual friends and such things, you know, you realise that at the end of the day they're no different. They're no less masculine but I-, you know, unfortunately, you still get the odd idiot who-, you know, who I do believe doesn't think that a homosexual man can be a masculine man and therefore if they're not a masculine man why are they playing a muscular-, a masculine sport if you see what I mean'.

(Frankie Interview Transcript)

It is thought-provoking to reflect upon the perception that homosexuality and masculinity cannot be positively associated with each other. It suggests, in this context, that homosexual men are not real men and cannot be masculine. Additionally, even though Frankie is not being intentionally stereotypical, he implies that only masculine men can play a masculine sport. This echoes the previous views that homosexual men who are effeminate cannot be good at sport, or that they must be good to avoid being marginalised by their team or other sportsmen.

As a homosexual sportsman, Chad gives some insight into his view of masculinity and sexuality in sport:

'I think, err I think gay contacts are often more erm hyper-aware of masculinity than even straight, straight contacts. I think straight guys actually a lot of times just don't think about that stuff at all and they do it, it's like it's very ritualised. Erm and obviously there's some guys who you know who do the, err I think- in the gay world I think that there's a really interesting, and not maybe healthy, push to masculinise the community'.

(Chad Interview Transcript)



Firstly, it is interesting to note that Chad feels that homosexual men have a greater grasp on the concept of true masculinity, over that of heterosexual men. Even though this is Chad's lived experience, and true to him, this body of work wishes to challenge that notion and suggest that issues of masculinity concern heterosexual and homosexual men alike. Secondly, reflecting on Chad's discourse throughout this Chapter, it is interesting to consider his worry that the 'gay world' might make a 'push to masculinise the community'. It could be concluded that Chad is at odds with homophobia and wishes it to be open and transparent, but it challenges the nature of his own beliefs regarding masculinity.

In concluding this subordinate theme, it is evident that the butch/camp binary is clearly embedded within the fears of homosexual men in sport. It could also be suggested that 'butch' might be the wrong terminology to use in this binary, and could be called the masculine/camp binary. De-emphasising their sexuality by 'passing as straight', or de-emphasising feminine attributes or qualities, such as walking, allows homosexual men to exist in the sporting arena without homophobia. The homophobia that exists within these constructs, aids in reaffirming and/or deconstructing perception of masculinity and sexuality. In conclusion, it is of particular note in this subordinate theme that masculinity and heterosexuality are interchangeable in terminology; 'straight is sleeping with women' and homosexuality is a 'genetic flaw'.

#### **5.3.1.4 Subordinate Theme: Performing in Sporting-Footwear: Shaping Homosocial Masculine Bonds, The Walk/Feet/Shoes Triad**

To start this superordinate theme, it should be argued that utilisation of an IPA abstract perspective allowed insight into the analysis of the role of sporting-footwear/social-sporting-footwear as an embodied environment. Taking this abstract perspective and continuing the narrative of this Superordinate theme, footwear should be interpreted as a performative, embodied, masculine-enabling

tool/space, through which homosocial sports can be performed and extended as masculine agency, power and performativity.

To initiate the analysis of this theme, it became evident that the motion of walking, the feet used for said walking and the footwear that cover those feet during walking are difficult to compartmentalise. The debate was raised and considered, and after careful thought the question put forward through the analysis process is, why compartmentalise them? They should be assimilated and interrogated and dismantled together, all three components work in conjunction with one another.

All the interviewed participants were able-bodied without any disabilities (apart from sport-induced injury), therefore disability was not an issue for discussion here and, if it was, it would alter the relationship of the triad. Therefore, this theme will deconstruct the walk, feet, shoes triad, using at times idiographic examples, while at other times exploring the issues from a multi-participant perspective. Once the triad has been explored in depth, insight will be given into the role of podolinguistics and the embodiment of masculinity in footwear.

The walk. Alan's 'camp walk' has appeared frequently throughout this body of work, as a signifier to heterosexual men of potential homosexuality. A single idiographic example from Alan's interview transcript will be used to explore these vertices of the triad. Alan states:

'Well, I was effeminate. I was very effeminate and, and even when I used to play tennis they used to say, you know, you look so gay [laughs] because I was really mincey. I used to play tennis like I was dancing around the court, which [laughs] was so funny'.

(Alan Interview Transcript)

Alan notes that his walk appeared effeminate to other men, and even provides self-loathing-homophobia, by describing himself as 'mincey'. Reading into mincing from a descriptive perspective, it appears that this effeminate walk may be like dancing. Alan provides personal links between mincing (effeminate walking), homosexuality and dancing. Walking was not the only aspect of Alan's embodied movement that came under scrutiny, so did the way he used to run:

'I always used to get teased because of the way I used to run, because I was so camp running you know. They'd say to me "Alan, don't run" [laughs], yeah'.

(Alan Interview Transcript)

The fact that Alan was told 'not to run', highlights the impact of de-emphasising queer, and the pressure of performativity, and the act of displaying a male role that isn't embodied naturally. It could be argued that the embodied performative actions through which he walks are a result of his embodied sexuality within sporting-footwear environment. We have to ask ourselves, why can't he walk the way he wants? Why is it so offensive?

Nonetheless, Alan, desperate to change, tells us more:

'And do you know what? I used to try my best to walk different, because people used to say to me, even my brother, he said to me "You need to learn to walk differently." And I would try to walk, it was crazy and I think back and I think why did I allow myself to try and be what I wasn't, because I ... you know I understand in Africa its homophobic, and people used to tease me for the way I walked, even when I came here I was walking down the road and I was walking home and someone threw a coin at me from a car, because of the way I walked, because I was obviously listening to some Beyoncé song, so I'm walking like a little gay boy along the road.

And I, you know, I always used to want to change the way I walked. So then when we'd come to do long distance there I was trying to run like a man'.

(Alan Interview Transcript)

Alan's embodied walk is a victim of socio-cultural homophobia; as indicated by the manner in which his own family and other people used to tease him. It could be suggested that Alan's walk is like homosexuality itself, it is not a choice, it is predetermined for him, and walking is a natural indicator of embodiment, as an extension of his shoes' embodied space.

The embodied motion of walking (amongst these analysed participants) cannot be considered without the involvement of the feet. Therefore, moving on to the next vertices of the triad, some participants did have some insight into the role of a masculine foot. To initiate this discussion John states:

'Masculine foot, oh well it would have ... probably have some hair on their toes and over their ... their dorsum of their foot. I would expect there to be callus on it but not too much callus, you know, callus around the heel. Maybe over the first met just because of you know, taking that extra weight and you know it's ... for some reason I always think you know, masculine men always seem to have an incompetent first. They always seem to have hallux limitus, which is a very manly condition to have. So I always think, oh yeah, they'll have that, they'll have a short first. As that's the only thing that's short, it's fine. What else? I always think they, you know, it's quite veiny, there's something about having superficial veins that are quite prominent, like on hands and on feet. It just says they've been, you know, the legs are very worked, so it's pushing more blood back so it's, you know, another sign of strength you know, because of that vein, it's returned. So I think that's quite

a, you know, a masculine trait. And a wide and big foot, you know, a narrow foot's not masculine or be a ... or a more sprawled, you know, wider fore foot and rear foot. Not thin toes, like proper, you know chunky toes'.

(John Interview Transcript)

Taking John's discourse from an analytical perspective and reflecting on the Superordinate Theme **(5.4.1) 'Embodied Unrest of the 'Bulked' Body: Muscle Ideology and Performative Violence'**; John's description of a masculine foot is reminiscent of a body builder or a mesomorphic man, fulfilling a metaphorical representation of a heterosexual orthodox male, this will briefly be deconstructed in more detail. Firstly John refers to the fact that the foot should have some hair on it, like a masculine hairy chest for instance; secondly he suggests that the foot should have callus on it (hard skin), it could be interpreted that this is similar to the callus' a bodybuilder would develop on his hands from weight lifting. Thirdly John moves into a description of the foot that is representative of the embodiment of muscle and the penis. John utilises medical terminology and refers to an incompetent first (the big toe), he also suggests that 'they'll have a short first', indicating pathology of the first, but on another abstract level, indicting at the phallus that is the big toe. This phallus representation is common in literature, but is also consciously suggested here through humour, 'As long as it's the only thing that's short', implying the penis. As John moves move on in his description, evident links are plausible between vascularity of feet, muscle vascularity and penis vascularity; through the suggestion of 'veiny', 'superficial veins', 'worked legs', and the pushing of 'more blood back'. It could be suggested that blood, and the pumping of muscle, penis, and feet, embody masculinity and exist at its core physically. John then summaries with the importance of size, this again has been a common issue for the embodiment of masculinity, muscle and penis. He indicates it needs to be a 'big foot', a 'wide fore foot' with 'chunky toes' the metaphors embody themselves, he states this through the marginalisation of narrow feet 'a narrow foot's not masculine', implying if its not big it is a

subordinate masculine foot. This falls in line with literature reviewing the attractiveness of foot size, whereby it was stated that smaller feet are seen as more attractive and feminine (Fessler, 2005).

John is not alone in his understanding of a masculine foot; Ben discusses it also:

‘I think a masculine foot would be one that is battered and bruised, with not much care taken to it [laughs]. It is funny that you say that, my mate has gone erm the worst big toe, his feet are all bent to one side, err, so we spoke about that, and comparing against them seeing how bent they are and all crumpled up they are.... A couple of us like compared feet and to see oh ‘your feet look quite nice’ and your feet are ‘all battered and bruised’, with blisters and sores all over them. Probably more a bit strange, [both laugh], to be honest that was just the structure of his feet, wasn’t the fact that his feet were all blistered and bruised or any more than all of ours, it was just the structure of his big toe turning out, but erm, a masculine foot would probably have to be one that was battered and bruised and not taken much care of and yeah’.

(Ben Interview Transcript)

The focus of Ben’s interpretation and lived experience of a masculine foot is one that is ‘battered and bruised’. It could be interpreted that this makes direct embodied links to the role of embodiment and violence in sport, through links of injury and results of those injuries. From an abstract perspective, bruising is an example of dried blood, or of an injury that is healing, it could be suggested that a bruise is an example of hegemonic masculinity e.g. blood, violence, damage, sport. The role of the big toe also appears in Ben’s discourse and the fact the Ben discovered what other men’s feet looked like through open homosocial bodily comparison. It could be suggested again that the big toe in Ben’s

discourse is an example of interpretation, of the big toe as phallus 'it was just the structure of his big toe turning out'.

John extends the embodied image of the foot within this triad and recounts the foot role in S&M fetish and forms of masculine role-play. John states that he has overheard 'some guys at his gym talking about foot fetish':

'Do you know, there's two guys that talk about feet. They've got foot fetishes. They're into the whole S & M scene.

**Interviewer: Okay, do you want to tell me about what you've heard or what they talk about?**

Yeah, they're talking about wanting to suck their toes or how they're perfectly formed and how, "Oh, you've got that little crease there that's a mini bunion. Oh, that turns me on and I just want to stroke it." I think 1) it's not a mini bunion, it's just a pressure sore from wearing tight shoes, whenever you hear them talking about it. One of them touched someone's feet and they were getting very excited about it, and I was like "Oh my God." There's a lot of obsession around socks as well or trainers, you know. It's "Oh, I wanna sniff your trainers. Oh, can I lick your socks? Can I lick your trainers?" And I think it's ... I look at it as a-, whenever it's things like that you think there's a part of gay men that have a self-loathing and a low self-esteem, a low self-worth, and I think of it as a degrading thing instead of being something that's, you know ... sex is quite intimate, something quite positive, you know. They've made it quite smutty and degrading because they must look down on themselves, and they sort of, you know ...

**Why do you think that trainers and footwear have become, you know ... what are they symbolising or ...**

It just seems very degrading, very ... and it seems to be sort of a domineering sort of thing, you know, when you are becoming dominant over someone and they're wanting to be more submissive. And I think that's quite ... it is a very ... it's like a self-loathing or some ... I don't mean that in a bad ... it's not in a bad way, it's just, you know, that's the way it sort of comes across'.

(John Interview Transcript)

It is apparent that John's discourse develops links between masculine feet, homosexuality and S&M foot fetish. The role of the big toe in John's sexual description is clearly a phallic representation, and the fact that John describes the men wanting to suck the big toe and stroke it, gives the mirror image impression of oral sex. It is interesting that the structure of the foot, such as the bunion and the creases, gives such arousal to the two men described by John, the creases of the toe could be representative of the foreskin. Moving on, it is interesting to analyse the discourse of touching feet, and sniffing socks and shoes; it could be suggested that touch is always potentially an erotic act and the sniffing of the shoes is about smelling sweat and the pheromones that are contained within that scent. In addition the licking of trainers and socks could also be an extended representation of oral sex; there is a sexual adoration of the items that sheath the foot. It is apparent that John finds the S&M foot performativity to be a self-loathing-homophobic act, and through performing this act Alan sees these men as being submissive, subordinate and/or degrading themselves. It could be suggested that there are evident links towards femphobia or homophobiaphobia, due to the submissive nature of foot/shoe/sock kissing, licking and sucking. Subsequently this notion of submissive men could be due to the locational issue that the feet are at the bottom of the body, they extend out the bottom of the legs, and in this instance are seem as a dirty body part.



In summary, it could be suggested that masculine feet are those associated with a sporting masculinity where damage and sweating of the feet, are representative of the work that the bodies in sport fulfil. Homosexual men who engage in sports and admire sportsmen are aroused and sexually satisfied with touching, sniffing and licking the work that these feet have undertaken.

Feet are however, the ultimate body part that fills the sporting-footwear space; they are the embodiment of performativity, for without feet to fill the footwear social space of the shoe, an alternative perception of sporting performativity will occur. In this respect, masculine agency and power are bound to the masculine representation of feet in sporting-shoes through which, some sportsmen believe, masculinity in sport abstractly extends.

The final vertices of this subordinate theme, is far more complex due to the fact that the definition of shoes in this context needs to be defined. There are three main shoes that will be discussed; firstly there are sporting-shoes/footwear, which are shoes sportsmen use to engage in sports; secondly there are social-sporting-shoes/footwear which are the shoes that people wear socially e.g. trainers; and finally there is general-footwear, this is the footwear that doesn't exist in a sporting context. It should be noted that at times participants used terms such as trainers, boots and shoes interchangeably, and as such - when needed - terms will be explicitly stated.

With regard to all the above types of footwear, it became apparent that comfort was a significant feature of footwear, regardless of its use. John and Ben give us an insight into their views of comfortable footwear:

'I tended to buy boots that I thought were comfortable and when I found a pair I was comfortable in I stuck with them. Particularly aware of ... I think I ran around in some Umbro football boots for ...

the same pair or the genesis of that pair, for maybe six or seven years, where they were just comfortable and they did the job for me’.

(Joseph Interview Transcript)

and:

‘Now it is just if I necessarily like the boot and comfortability, I try to go for original ones as much as I can’.

(Ben Interview Transcript)

Unsurprisingly, there is a commonly held view that footwear should be comfortable, especially if you are partaking in sport, your feet are the carrier of all the weight and effort. Phenomenologically it is interesting to note the use of comfortability within Ben’s interview transcript, as he changes its use from a verb to a noun.

In the same vain, Chad feels that comfort is a form of function:

‘Manly shoes I think of as, as being as functional, comfortable is that’.

(Chad Interview Transcript)

Joseph continues this theme of comfort and footwear, and refers to foot health:

‘So it really is about making sure that my feet are well looked after. Totally driven by, feet are looked after, they’re the shoes I want. For kicking around and just in the garden, messing around shoes, I’ll normally have a cheap pair of Nike or a cheap pair of Adidas. So it’s just something that fits on my foot that I know would be a well manufactured ... So there’s still this kind of functional element, a well manufactured pair of shoes, pair of boots, trainers, all these

different words. So, yes, a well manufactured pair of trainers, really'.

(Joseph Interview Transcript)

In Joseph's discourse similarities can be noted to that of Chad's previous commentary, Joseph also talks about the fact that shoes should be well manufactured and have a functional element that supports comfort of the foot. At the outset of this thesis it was considered that comfort would be one of the most important factors, due to the fact that comfort links to better performance than that of feet that are in pain in uncomfortable footwear.

Of most interest, is the point that colour was the most significant factor, by far, that impacted on a man's podolinguistic attitude towards choice of footwear, and perception of other men's footwear. It should also be stated that this was irrespective of the sexuality of the participant interviewed. John opens with his observations of brightly coloured social-sporting-footwear:

'I don't like bright colours, oh, they're horrible, it's when people wear those ones, that are, you know, fluorescent blue and the whole shoe's fluorescent, you just want to go and dye it black. You know I like them simple blacks, whites, reds, maybe blacks, white, blue, you know, probably manly colours, you know. And the colours are quite telling because I just wouldn't want to. No, because in all fairness, you know, you wonder why some people get beat up, but if you're walking around in fluorescent trainers you deserve it because it just looks stupid, you know. I think because also cultural areas from Belfast and you just didn't walk around like a bumblebee, you know, people would look at you funny and make fun of you. And I just think in London it's just a bit more ... the more outrageous you are the more ... and they try to shock people deliberately. If you look at them in pride they just ... it's not you

know a political stand anymore, it's we're trying to shock people and invoke a response, which is just inciting hatred and you just sort of look at it that way, well, in my head'.

(John Interview Transcript)

John dislikes brightly coloured footwear, and feels they should be black in colour, giving them a neutral feel. It is also interesting to note that John thinks it is a legitimate excuse for beating someone up, indicating as he suggests 'they look stupid'. In addition John likes primary colours when it comes to his essence of his sporting-footwear, it could be suggested that this indicates simplicity and purity of colour. From a metaphorical perspective John thinks that wearing brightly coloured shoes is very similar to being like a 'bumblebee', it could be suggested that John's metaphorical indication is that of femphobia. Considering John is a homosexual man, from his perspective of colour and footwear, it could be suggested that he is trying to de-emphasise queer from a social-sporting-footwear perspective. Frankie continues this discussion of coloured footwear and perception, from a sporting footwear perspective:

'If someone wears a coloured boot, it's not that they're seen as less feminine. It's more that they're seen as maybe an exhibitionist, you know. So those players tend to get targeted on the pitch, which I've learnt over time as well, you know. If you've got coloured boots on, it means you're trying to show off or trying to be a bit flashy. So you tend to get targeted by the other team but I wouldn't say I would view one-, for me personally, I like the classic kind of-, the classic black boots with the overlapping tongue which cover the laces which is your Puma King, your Adidas, your Umbro. That's just-, you know, just what I like and I think it's-, when I play football I like to think I look good playing football and I think that's what I think I look best in. So it does-, for me, it does have a certain fashion element to it but, yes, now when I see these kids with like coloured

boots, I just think they look bloody stupid but I don't think-, and I don't know. I've never really thought about it. Maybe I do think they're a little less masculine and I've coached girls' football before and-, with the girls, it's a little bit different. They wear all sorts of coloured boots whereas typically if you come to a man's football game, they tend to be, you know, kind of-, a classic kind of black. You start-, you get more-, much more variety of colours now, colours as well. So, you know, you get the navy blue which I've seen a bit but for me personally I like that classic kind of black with the overlapping tongue which covers the laces'.

(Frankie Interview Transcript)

It is interesting that Frankie whilst at first doesn't associate brightly coloured footwear in football with effeminacy. However later in Frankie's discourse he does express the fact that perhaps he does perceive brightly coloured sporting-shoes as more feminine, then elaborates and makes comparisons to women in football. It could be suggested that in feminising brightly coloured shoes in this context, Frankie is suggesting that brightly coloured sporting-footwear are subordinate in nature and through wearing them it, could be a subordinate performative choice, affecting perception and identity. Nonetheless, Frankie also implies that if you are going to wear brightly coloured sporting-footwear then you need to be excellent player. Brightly coloured sporting-shoes podolinguistically suggest that you are a 'flashy' player, a show off, and by suggesting this identity you need to perform fittingly, otherwise it will be a victim of violence. In this instance, this is not a form of phobia, but a challenge to Masculine Capital and performativity. Through damage and violence, your embodied masculinity will be challenged.

Finally, Frankie is very similar to John with respect to the fact that they both like wearing dark neutral colours in the sporting-footwear and social-sporting-footwear context. Reading deeper into this, it could be suggested that this is a

form of anonymity, through de-emphasising overtly flashy and or feminised podolinguistic cues. These could be called anti-queer colours.

Darwin likes wearing brightly coloured sporting-footwear and exposes some insight into his lived experiences:

'I do quite like them, but players do come in for a lot of grief. It's sort of-, most of my work is done in women's football. How there's such a huge difference in like what boots are sort of acceptable. Like if you go and play ... I played with one lad that used to wear bright yellow, bright red. He used to change his boots every other week, but like he'd get grief for wearing his boots, and you'd see people would smash him up in the air purely because he was wearing these boots, or he'd get "What did you do that for? Get them daft things off your feet" sort of thing, where in the women's environment it's sort of like players I deal with where they're white, pink and purple vapours, and they're deemed as "Oh, they're well nice. Where did you get them from?" Like my sister plays in bright white and bright blue boots and it's more sort of "Oh, they're nice. They match the kit well" rather than sort of "Oh, you're wearing daft boots. You've got to be good to wear them" sort of thing'.

(Darwin Interview Transcripts)

It can be noted that Darwin quite likes wearing brightly coloured sporting-footwear, however he does make an association between women's football and brightly coloured sports-shoes (as previously stated in other participants discourses). This suggests that men are at risk of feminisation through the association of brightly coloured footwear, although, Darwin does reiterate the fact that if you're going to wear brightly coloured sporting-shoes, you've got to 'be good to wear them'. Darwin's discourse also reiterates the issue that if you are

going to wear brightly coloured sporting-footwear, anyone who is not good enough to perform in his chosen sporting-footwear will be a victim of violence.

Reading deeper into the podolinguistic significance of sporting-footwear Joseph gives us some insight:

‘So I guess if you’ve got thirty thousand fans in a stand watching some guys and one guy’s got something absolutely dazzling on, then I guess there’d be all sorts of abuse and all sorts of connotations to it, that somehow it reflects their personality or sexuality, or they somehow thought they were more special or better than the average player who just had the generic sports branded boots on. So I guess that could be open to it. Certainly nothing that I’ve been aware of as a spectator of sport, but knowing how football fans might behave, I could imagine it would be something that could be associated with their personality or whatever’.

(Joseph Interview Transcript)

Joseph indicates that brightly coloured sporting-shoes could be a reflection of an athlete’s personality or sexuality; through wearing a brightly coloured footwear you are more than ‘average player’, you are better than average, implying your Masculine Capital is better than the norm. It is an overt signifier of your internal Masculine-Capital subconscious.

Chad and Joseph also interpreted the notion of flashy, colourful sporting-footwear equally sporting ability:

‘I think squash shoes are horrible in general and you just get some absolutely horrific coloured squash shoes. They’re like greens and blues and like and I don’t know it’s just too, too much. I probably, I

think that they're trying to be flashy, and then after I think that they're being flashy I probably connect that to. I ask whether or not, that they can, that their sport ability can actually match. And my past experience is that often times it doesn't. Erm, which I find really annoying'.

(Chad Interview Transcript)

'I just see this kind of bright burst of colour and think right, there. Yes, I mean, they'd get stick for it. The association is that it's something that's particularly fancy Dan, so they must really back themselves. These people must have something to show, and if they didn't show it they'd get stick. So you're turning up here in your yellow, whatever, and you can't play the game. So it was ... I guess there's an association there between fancy boots and fancy skills. And even if people didn't turn up saying, look at my boots, I'm going to beat you, there's still ... they'd be judged if they couldn't. They'd probably get stick for it. They probably would get some kind of abuse, that you turn up here in your fancy boots, kind of thing, and you haven't got it, kind of thing'.

(Joseph Interview Transcript)

Chad's and Joseph's insight into flashy sporting-footwear highlights a dislike for brightly coloured sporting-shoes but additionally indicates that sportsmen that wear brightly coloured sporting-shoes are not often able to fulfil the masculine signifier of sporting ability as intended. They will be judged if they don't perform accordingly and be the victim of abuse.

Superstition also seemed to be factor, as Frankie perceived a pair of brightly coloured football boots as a bad omen:



'I had a pair of coloured pair of boots in the Puma King and then I broke my leg in them. So I-, after that, I vowed never to wear coloured boots again. I viewed them as an unlucky-, and I never-, I've never put a coloured pair of boots on my feet since. It's always been black'.

(Frankie Interview Transcript)

For Frankie, the brightly coloured boots became synonymous with injury and pain. It could suggest, (referring to previous comments highlighted by other interviewees about colour sporting-shoes) that Frankie might not actually be as good at football as he might have thought, and therefore would have to tone down the podolinguistic signifiers that he was a cocky flashy footballer, through wear black footwear.

Developing the role of colour and footwear Joseph adds his views on masculine colours associated with footwear in general:

'Masculine colours, I would assume as being darker colours like blacks and navy's erm, browns and stuff like that, whereas, a woman's shoe would probably be a bit more brighter, whites and pinks and purples'.

(Ben Interview Transcript)

It can be noted that masculine colours here are those that are darker, women and the role of femininity are used to define what these masculine colours are. Joseph adds to this lived experience of masculine sports-footwear suggesting that he would really only ever wear black football boots:

'I'd always just go for a kind of black or ... black leather boots. Kind of what I grew up with and what I've always played in. Yes, it would always just be plain black leather. I don't know. I don't know why?

That's a really interesting question. I think it's quite a traditional view, I think, that the colour doesn't make you a better player, it doesn't make you more outstanding, it doesn't make a statement about you, in my view. It's kind of ... it's what you do when you've put your foot in them and used your brain and used your physicality, whatever it is, to be a better player. I'm aware of, you know, nowadays, professional footballers with branded boots and all sorts of fancy colours and stuff, and it passes me by'.

(Joseph Interview Transcript)

Joseph indicates that when purchasing football boots for himself, he would only ever buy black leather football boots. Joseph contradicts some of his previous statements regarding colour and sporting-footwear and indicates a different perception when considering black sporting-footwear. Joseph feels that black sporting-footwear indicates a traditional performativity on the pitch; he believes that a fancy colour in sporting-footwear doesn't make you a better player. Joseph remarks that it is about connecting your brain to your feet, it is not what the colour represents, it is the embodiment of the shoe that completes the sportsman, and makes him successful.

Alan also had some insight regarding colour and masculine footwear:

'Down the straight, down the range, a masculine shoe, sort of boring, very boring, just one colour, the guy, you know, some straight guys, they won't wear anything that's got colours on it, just want plain, no logos or anything, you know, they just want something plain. I'd say a plain shoe for me is more masculine, not something robust, because saying that, you get these shoes that are quite robust, they look quite chunky. Those Merrell shoes are a bit more masculine I think. Merrell, so type of khaki combat colours, I've seen a lot of the more sort of, masculine gay guys that

wear those sort of things. They will wear Merrell trainers, whereas the more effeminate gays will wear Asics or the Nike split sole. So they'll go a bit more fancy sort of flamboyant in a way, whereas the butch guys will just wear Merrell, those Merrell trainers maybe'.

(Alan Interview Transcript)

The clear message from Alan's discourse is the reiteration that masculine footwear should be one colour and 'boring'. Alan however, is failing to discriminate between masculinity and heterosexuality, and is confusing boring with heterosexuality in this context. It could be suggested that Alan is displaying inadvertent heterophobia through his description of sporting-footwear. He also suggests that colourful social-sporting-footwear is a form of flamboyance that is synonymous with homosexual men in the gym setting. Colour to Alan is a feminine podolinguistic signifier.

Alan in his description of masculine sporting-footwear, echoes his discourse surrounding muscles and body size. Masculine footwear is chunky, quite robust, and butch guys 'will just wear Merrell, those Merrell trainers maybe'.

It appears as if the role of colour in sporting-footwear and social-sporting-footwear is associated with deviant behaviours or signifiers e.g. flamboyance, flashiness, femininity or homosexuality. As is the case with many deviant behaviours and/or subordinate groups, mickey-taking appears to be common practice within masculine-defining hierarchies.

Ben initiates this discussion of mickey-taking and coloured sporting-footwear:

'Yeah there is a player on my team actually who has got a pair of red boots with yellow and green, so they were quite outrageous, because you just don't expect it any more, you just expect, like a normal pair of black boots or white boots, that have probably got a

different little tick on them or line on them or something like that, that's going to change and you will normally end up paying one hundred pounds more, but erm these ones were really quite cheap, I think they were only about ten pounds, considering everyone else's were like fifty or something like that, so his were only ten pounds and he said that's was what he went for, he said that they were ten pounds and stood out so much, he said 'actually I am going to get them', but yeah he has got a bit of criticism for it [laughs]'.

(Ben Interview Transcript)

Ben's discourse suggests again that the role of colour is a little outrageous, it may also seem that it was a practice that had its moment in time 'you don't expect to see it any more'. What is more significant is that the black sporting-footwear, like heterosexuality is considered 'normal'; which implies that everything is abnormal within Ben's world and experiences. There is also the implication of cost of sporting footwear within Ben's discourse, it suggests that price isn't everything, and that simply being normal, 'black' in colour with a tiny understated tick on them suggests normality and masculinity.

Ben extends his discussion of brightly coloured boots and mickey-taking:

'Because he is ginger-haired, we all compare his red boots to his ginger hair, and say that his boots are not going to make him play any better and his boots look as rubbish as how he is going to play and stuff like that just silly banter and stuff'.

(Ben Interview Transcript)

So here the embodied mockery of a player's skills are extended to the colour of his hair, and a comparison with the footwear he has chosen. As an aside it is always important to remember a player has chosen to put a particular shoe on

their feet, and risk the effects of the signifiers they produce to other men. These links to embodiment, identity, and footwear in general, are exposed in brief by Frankie and Ben:

'I don't know. I'd like to think maybe they said that I was-, you know, I had a little bit of fashion sense. I was a little bit trendy I guess. It's maybe personally what I'd like them to maybe say about me, you know. Maybe he's-, you know, he's a little bit different but, you know, saying that now, you see so many people in Converse trainers now that, yes, I'm not really that different but, you know, for me, I just-, I like the way these shoes particularly suit the type of jean that I like to wear at the moment'.

(Frankie Interview Transcript)

Ben adds:

'It is quite plain [the trainer/boot], and you can create your own identities and nothing can take that away from you. I think that's how I would create it and it would be again like a black or a white or something like that, not much to stand out, not much exuberance to it, not much colour, because, I would want to create my own identity from the shoe'.

(Ben Interview Transcript)

Firstly reading into Frankie's transcript it can be noted that he wanted to people to think he was fashionable, that he was different from the norm; as a heterosexual man he wanted to challenge heteronormative stereotypes and footwear. However, most significant is the insight highlighted by Ben, whereby he exposes the reasoning behind the choice and representation of plain boots in football; basically if there is limited colour on the boot he can create his own identity. It limits the signifiers produced from a podolinguistic perspective, and

makes observers focus on the sportsman's abilities, rather than anything that the footwear could possibly represent.

At this point, the role of bright colours and black footwear has been discussed, and their podolinguistic embodied relationship with masculinity touched upon. However, the colour white appears to have an even greater embodied relationship with masculinity and sport-footwear/social-sporting-footwear. Darwin opens up this discussion of white social-sporting-footwear:

'I'm trying to think of sort of the uber-masculine people and what they'd sort of wear. You get a range of sort of ... I think the ones that want to be uber-masculine want to wear the white, pin white, clean all the time, sort of bigger trainers, but then sort of the people I think of that are an uber-male, sort of the dominant figure in any-, whatever group they go in will be the dominant male, they almost go in unnoticed". Like, having said this, I generally wear white trainers but they normally end up battered within about five minutes anyway with sort of ... but I'll sort of ... I've known people buy a pair of trainers 'cause they look "Oh, they look nice'.

(Darwin Interview Transcript)

Darwin who wears white social-sporting-footwear regards it to be extremely 'uber-masculine', footwear; these are bigger trainers and very white. Darwin's commentary echoes that of Ben and his interpretation of identity and black football boots; here Darwin suggests that white social-sporting-shoes are likely to go unnoticed, providing an element of anonymity, so that observers of the man focus on the man and not his adornments.

Ben gives us some more insight into white social-sporting-footwear:

'I think it is just, it is just the way that it has been advertised to people, this is an original shoe from Reebok in times when in the 60's, 70's or 80's and this is when men used to wear them, and you can wear them again now, and bring back that culture, so erm I think there is a particular culture surrounding around some shoes, and saying this is a man's shoe, but I think some shoes can have that difference in terms of masculinity or femininity, and it can be adapted and changed, so it can suit the other gender'.

(Ben Interview Transcript)

Ben's interview transcript gives us insight into branding and the role that the 'Reebok Classic' has in defining masculine social-sporting-footwear. Ben suggests it is a cultural matter and that throughout the last forty years the white social-sporting-shoe has coexisted with other footwear, but has continually been at the forefront at defining masculine footwear. Ben continues his insight into white social-sporting-footwear and cultural definitions of masculinity:

'I don't know. I guess because, it is used quite bland in itself, it's not got much to it, the white Reebok, it's just plain white and all white, with a little bit of Reebok sign on it, and I think, it's almost saying, you can wear this shoe and develop your own sense of identity from it, so, if you are saying a gang culture where everyone wears Reebok classics, this is what our gang wears, so you develop your own identity from the shoe. When you have got a shoe that's all multi-coloured and everything like that, it kind of creates the identity for you, whereby the other way, because it is so bland, it's just plain white, you can do the other way around, you can decide what your identity is'.

(Ben Interview Transcript)

So, in defining masculinity, it appears that one needs footwear that represents no definition at all, as if the podolinguistic representations are mute. However, it appears as if men imprint their own masculine status on social-sporting-footwear rather than the other way around. It is also significant to refer to the comment whereby Ben infers a relationship between white social-sporting-footwear and masculine gang culture; here it simply reiterates the fact that white footwear provides uniformity and a multi-single-identity within a gang culture. The gang of men define each other's masculine status via their footwear. Reading deeper into Ben's statement and previous discourse on coloured sporting footwear, it appears that those looking to wear brightly coloured footwear are asking for these definitions to be made, so that the performative role is taken away from them.

Taking a different perspective on white social-sporting-footwear, Philip adds:

'It perplexes me. [Laughs] I really don't kind of understand the kind of look that that kind of culture would aspire to, you know, tracksuits, caps, white trainers and chains. What's it about? I'm not quite sure really what that's meant to portray. It certainly wouldn't-, to me it wouldn't portray masculinity. It would portray slightly dodginess, so a bit of a risk taker, a bit of a, you know, what's the word, a bit of a chancer'.

(Philip Interview Transcript)

This interpretation of white footwear could be considered to be a representation of hegemonic masculinity but, nonetheless, Philip feels that this isn't masculinity as much as it could represent a class divide. Joseph in his interview transcript adds some additional insight considering, gang culture, white social-sporting-footwear and identity:

'I guess very ... heterosexual male and represents almost a subculture of hard men, I guess, that float between legally hard and



being illegally hard, so there's a kind of ... there's quite a strong, heterosexual male stereotype in there, I guess. Because when I see Danny Dyer and we talk about fashion and brand ambassador, he's a very Fred Perry kind of brand for me. So it's kind of ... And I think there's all sorts of ambiguities within Fred Perry in terms of ... it represents this kind of ... almost like a mod culture which has gone on to gang football culture and represents a very special type of Englishness where it might be about bravado and drinking beer and being hard'.

(Joseph Interview Transcript)

Joseph's insight into white social-sporting-footwear underpins and supports Ben and Philip's previous comments. Culture, class and masculine identity seem to be at odds here; Joseph suggests that wearing this white footwear indicates that you are 'strong, masculine, heterosexual, legally and illegally hard'. Joseph directs us to consider the role of football gang culture, and the representation of a 'special kind of Englishness', whereby toughness, beer drinking and hegemonic masculinity are at its essence. It is fascinating that even though these men are trying to dissolve any fixed identity, with insight and questioning this identity is exposed.

Alan and Frankie add further insight into the role of white social-sporting-footwear and culture:

'You see someone wearing those Reebok classics and you think, football, chav, don't you? Anyone who wears Reebok classics is a chav. They're unfortunate that's what society has perceived anyone to Reebok classics. You know you ... you see a lady, she's wearing something nice then she's got Reebok classics and you think chavvy shoe'.

(Alan Interview Transcript)

'Yes, I do. I have a dislike, not a dislike of, you know, the people individually because I don't know them but, you know, I think wearing those shoes you get stereotyped, you know, as a, you know, chav, football hooligan, that type of thing'.

(Frankie Interview Transcript)

Alan and Frankie both perceive the white social-sporting-shoe as a 'chavvy' shoe; it appears to be synonymous with football gang culture and hooliganism. In this instance it could be suggested that white social-sporting-footwear is still hegemonically masculine, since violence and sporting culture are present within the paradigm. However, it could be implied that, depending on the culture and class of the wearer and the podolinguistic interpretation, the white Reebok classic can be interpreted as having socio-negative connotations with said violence and hegemony. However, it appears that if you transcend the social-sporting-footwear context and consider white football boots in the sporting-footwear context, Darwin suggests some alternative insight:

'It's less so now with the boots the more and more colours that are coming out, but there was like pin white boots were just sort of deemed sort of you've got to be good to wear them. If you're mediocre and wear them, you're sort of inviting yourself to either get some verbal grief or to get booted by someone. I'm not quite sure why. It's sort of-, it's strange how you can get away with brighter sort of dafter colours. I've seen people wear bright orange, bright yellow boots, and them not get the treatment. Someone comes out in sort of whiteish boots and they get plastered by someone'.

(Darwin Interview Transcript)

It appears in the lived world of sporting-footwear, white doesn't carry the same kudos as in the social-sporting-footwear world. White in this football illustration carries the same sporting podolinguistic signifiers as brightly coloured footwear, that one is a flashy, confident player, and ultimately it encourages other players to want to damage that sportsman and remove them from the game. The connotations of a hard, uber-masculine and violent 'chav' doesn't seem to be present in this world, otherwise players would chose to avoid them, rather than hurt them. Darwin continues to develop his insights:

'You quite often get sort of "You look gay in those boots. Look at you, you queer with your daft boots on." You get "Right, if you're gonna wear them, that means I'm gonna boot you in the air next time you get it." You get sort of a bit of physical. If you back into them you get pinches, you get studs on the toes, sort of as they're standing on them "They ain't gonna be white for much longer," bam, and sort of bits like that'.

(Darwin Interview Transcript)

It appears as if the colour white in football boots has caused the most adverse reaction so far in the role of podolinguistic interpretation. It is also significant that white appears to have provoked the most homophobic reactions to identity and the representation of white in sports-footwear. 'Queer' and 'gay' were used to describe these white football boots and it could be suggested it is an attempt to feminise the masculine signifying power of the sporting-footwear. However, it is not only the homophobic language used that is insightful, it is the indication that they will provoke a violent response. It is interesting to note that one of the threats is that 'they ain't gonna be white for much longer', suggesting that this is a threat to Masculine Capital, that through tainting the white, masculinity will also be tainted.

Briefly, from a general footwear perspective and away from sporting-footwear/social-sporting-footwear, one type of general-footwear appeared to be the focus of masculine symbolism: boots. Ben starts this discussion:

‘Particularly with Timberland boots and stuff like that, it’s a workers boot, it’s a man’s boot, you don’t necessarily see women with it, so I would say that is a masculine type of shoe to wear’.

(Ben Interview Transcript)

Ben’s discourse suggests that boots are a masculine form of footwear, simply because it divides it from any association of femininity. Ben constructs an unintentional misogynistic slip, calling them a ‘workers boot’ and stating that ‘it’s a man’s boot, you don’t see women with it’, implying that women don’t, or couldn’t do manual labour.

However, Alan develops some interesting insight into masculinity, sexuality and boots. An extended example of his dialogue is given:

‘It sort of makes them look ... I think that’s what they think is quite masculine, is the boots, it’s the leather, the big boots. Yeah, so going back to saying about what’s a masculine shoe, that formal shoe but then you say boots, like army boots, those boots that come up to here, all the fetish guys, you know, wear boots. I had to go to ... well no, I didn’t have to, I wanted to ... and I’d never had a pair of boots in my life and because I’m a size five I couldn’t find any so I had to go to a shop and get some. But you had to wear boots to go to this club otherwise you couldn’t get in’.

(Alan Interview Transcript)

Alan supports Ben’s statement, signifying that boots indicate labour of some form or another, here it is being in the army. However, Alan takes it a step further and

suggests that boots are a form of fetish within the homosexual community. Alan continues his monologue:

'I think that they want to be seen as butch and masculine, yet they're quite bottom some of them. It's quite funny, that you expect the big guys to be the tops, I mean, and there I was wanting them to be the tops, and they were all bottoms. I was quite shocked by that, because I thought, yeah, he's a big muscle guy, he's wearing boots, cos you look at the boots don't you? You look at the boots and you think yeah, he's a man ... he's a man. And he starts talking to you and he ... he wants you to do him, and like no way. You know I had to get these boots to come here and I want you but you're a bottom [laughs]. That's funny. That's weird for me. I still don't get it with the bigger guys. And I know I shouldn't think of things that way, that big guys are tops, because it's not. It's not that way. But for me I identify the boots with the big masculine guy, big hairy, you know, with the harness or whatever. He's the top for me, he's a man, hairy chest, cigar, boots'.

(Alan Interview Transcript)

There are multifactorial issues that are raised in Alan's discourse. Firstly, there is the indication that 'boots are masculine' and a signifier in podolinguistic terms of hegemonic masculinity. Nonetheless, Alan reiterates a previously discussed issue, de-emphasising queer, however, this time though, through footwear and the body. Alan expresses anger at the fact that, if a homosexual man is going to perform in a heteronormative manner by 'appearing butch' e.g. though wearing leather boots and having large muscles, he needs to be a 'top'. Alan is referencing the sexual roles of 'top' and 'bottom' in homosexual relationships, meaning the giver or receiver of anal intercourse. Alan feels in this instance that a leather boot-wearing, hairy 'muscle mary' should de facto be a top. Much to Alan's disdain, through the de-emphasising of Queer, the role of body building,

and the lies indicated by podolinguistic signifiers, he has found these men are usually bottoms (anally-passive). He feels frustrated by the lies that the footwear has indicated a truth that in actual fact represents the opposite.

In concluding this subordinate theme, it is true to say that the walk – feet -shoes triad is embodied with masculine signifiers. In an attempt to divide up this triad, hopefully the reader has been able to identify the importance in the symbolic interaction coexisting within such a potentially simple concept.

It can be seen that walking, and the possibility of outing one's self through a feminised walk, such as mincing, can provoke a homophobic response, like those experienced by Alan. Indeed, he was, discriminated and marginalised by society and family, but embodied the role of de-emphasising queer in an attempt to perform heteronormative ideals.

The role of the masculine foot was studied and experienced by some of the heterosexual participants, who felt that a masculine foot should be battered bruised and large in size. The symbolic representation of the large toe as phallus was evident in some of the participant's discourse, even more so when the role of fetish and foot admiration was introduced and exposed. In the discourse, it was felt that admiration and sexual pleasure taken for foot sucking and stroking was a subordinate act, and was frowned upon by John, who has overheard this conversation in the locker room.

Finally, the most complex part of the triad was the analysis of shoes and their relationship to masculinity and embodiment. Most pointedly, it was noted that colour plays the most important part in representing the embodied sportsman and his chosen footwear. If you are going to wear brightly coloured sporting-shoes then you need to be able to prove that you have excellent sporting abilities. The podolinguistic signifiers of brightly coloured sporting-shoes in the sporting environment appear to provoke a 'red rag to a bull' syndrome, indicating that men

will charge at you and damage you, proving that you are not as sportingly proficient as you think you are. The most masculine and normal sporting-shoes and social-sporting-shoes to wear are those that are black or extremely neutral in colour; podolinguistically these signify 'normal', 'traditional' and 'masculine' they do not challenge normal social thinking.

Social-sporting-shoes took centre stage when the colour white was reflected upon. It appears that white and Reebok classics podolinguistically represented a masculinity that was hegemonic in essence; the men that wear these shoes are hard men, are butch, are big, drink a lot of alcohol and could be considered untrustworthy. However, if white is worn on the football pitch within a sporting context, they contain the same podolinguistic signifiers as brightly coloured shoes. In addition, one participant's discourse highlighted that they provoked homophobic and violent responses.

From a unique perspective, the role of general footwear could not be ignored and one homosexual participant in particular felt that 'labourer's boots' most fittingly indicated masculinity to him. Nonetheless, Alan's discourse was filled with turmoil, simply because he felt that homosexual men that wear boots represented a form of homosexual butch masculinity, that didn't align with the boots' podolinguistic signifiers. He felt that the boots represented heteronormative masculinity, but the men that were wearing them, whilst appearing as butch, were in his reality sexually 'feminine'. It was suggested that, podolinguistically, boots can lie.

Reflecting on homosocial environments, the shoe itself (the leather, stitching, laces, and sole) creates the casing through which this sporting space is created. This materialised outer shell of the shoe provides the space for the foot to sit which builds on the role of masculine agency as a symbol of power, belief, performativity and hegemonic masculinity. Queering this, it could be argued that this space, and the creation of this footed-environment, enables the complexities

of podolinguistics. The signifiers that are represented on the pitch and in social environments by performing masculinities in chosen boots/trainers are extensions of institutionalised regimes of footwear and their associated power within masculine social structures. It could be stated that by choosing 'traditional' colours of sporting-footwear and social-sporting-footwear, men are experiencing an environment whereby not challenging it and fighting the socially structured regime through 'bright colours', can actually support their insight in to their own masculine agency.

It also should be noted that, sporting-footwear and social-sporting-footwear, shape how men interact in homosocial sporting environments. The podolinguistic qualities of footwear in the sporting context becomes a vehicle through which men judge, and make assumptions about the threat of other men's dominance and masculinity. This can be through performance, embodied ability and the symbolic representations of footwear.

In summary it can be stated that the walk, feet, shoe triad is a complex paradigm of representation, interpretation, agency and embodiment. All three parts of the triad are interrelated, and have a direct impact on the interpretation of each vertices depending on the choice of shoe, the type of foot, and the walk from which the other two vertices are extended. In addition, masculinity in this example can be embedded in a footed-environment, which in turn shaped how men interact and bond in through podolinguistic-homosociality.

#### **5.4 Conclusions**

To conclude this Chapter in its total, it is hoped that the thematic narrative has been clearly mapped throughout all these, now set, concrete themes.

To summarise the overall thematic results of this Chapter, each Superordinate Theme and the associated Subordinate Themes will be concluded in turn. The first Superordinate Theme **'Embodied Unrest of the 'Bulked' Torso: Muscle**



**Ideology and Performative Violence’ (5.2.1)’** considered the importance of particular bulked body parts in the Subordinate Theme, **‘To Bulk or Not to Bulk’- Body Parts and Muscle Bulk, (5.2.1.1)**, here the role of masculine agency and the function of the passive body aesthetic became a focus of the participants narrative. In taking stock of this theme and leading it to a conclusion, men desire and are driven by the aesthetic of big bulked muscles, especially those of the upper half of the male torso and the discourse of the theme suggests that big muscles can never be big enough. Here men appear to define their masculinity through a Neanderthal physical appearance. This sense of dissatisfaction men embody trying to achieve the ideal masculine hypermesomorphic body type, leads men to embody a disillusioned sense of self and masculinity, this is discussed further in the Subordinate Theme, **‘Disillusioned Embodiment’, (5.2.1.2)**. Here the role of the body is discussed through comparing body types with other men, however, as a result of this disillusionment the use of steroids and associated body dysmorphia are illuminated.

As the disillusioned bulked body engages in the sporting environment, the next Subordinate Theme, **‘Bulked’ Embodied Violence: Verbal and Physical Violence, (5.2.1.3)’**, reflects upon the participants discourse and violence. In this theme the role of the ‘embodied verbal weapon’ is introduced, whereby violence and provocation is incited through the internal embodied voice. In addition, the body itself is used as a weapon to cause violence, and fulfil one of the tenets of Masculine Capital. This theme demonstrates the link between the power of muscles, the fear and passivity of the aesthetic gaze and masculine agency.

The second Superordinate **‘Performative Masculinities Embodied in Homosocial Environments’, (5.3.1)’** though the participants discourse reflected upon the role of masculinity in homosocial environments, the Subordinate Theme, **‘Cock-Supremacy’ a New Tenet of Masculine Capital and the Homoerotic Gaze, Embodied in the Locker Room Male Sex Role’, (5.3.1.1)**

revealed that 'Cock-Supremacy' (C.S) was a legitimate cause for discussion for all the male participants. It was ultimately conceded, with the use of Masculinity Theory and the overarching concept of Masculine Capital, that C.S was a legitimate supplementary tenet to be added to this already formed theory. To support this notion further, if a man within a team or sport has a large penis, he moved quickly to the top in terms of performance expectations. He also fulfilled the role of a hegemonic masculine male as, by being associated with this large cocked male, all the other teammates gained an amount of Masculine Capital, which in turn increased their hierarchical status. To conclude this Subordinate Theme, men could only know who had Cock-Supremacy by gazing at other men, which in turn caused a level of concern as men became more aware of de-clothing and feared scrutiny and mockery. As was often the case with men in the locker room setting, humour and banter was the vehicle to expose these issues. At the forefront of this humour and banter was the fear of exposing homosexuality, and/or arousal.

As this theme moves forward, discourse turned to the importance of men in the locker room. The Subordinate Theme '**Homosociality in the Locker Room**', (5.3.1.2), relived the lived experiences of men in the locker room of physical contact and bonding, whilst taking stock of the role of performative grooming in the locker room. It is through these performative acts in the locker room, men hope to expose other men's sexuality, and feel safe within these homosocial environments. It was of interest to note that homosexual men often recalled finding like minded individuals within the sporting environment, which transformed it into a safe, less hegemonically male threatening environment.

Moving onto the next Subordinate Theme, "**Passing as Straight**": **De-Emphasising Queer in Fear of Homophobia**', (5.3.1.3), defining a safe homonormative environment became of particular importance to many of the homosexual participants, through the role of heteronormative performativity. Through the analysis process, it became of particular importance to perform

embodied movements, in heteronormative masculine fashion e.g., de-emphasising any queer qualities. It became clearly apparent though the homosexual participants narratives that homophobia was evident and present within the sporting community, especially from homosexual men about other homosexual men. The role of the butch vs. camp binary evolved through the analysis, as a tool to queer this binary, and give the subordinate-camp masculinities a voice; this voice was broadcast via a Queered-IPA perspective. This voice argues that performing butch homosexual masculinities in sport need, to exist in conjunction with a de-emphasis of feminised homosexuality. Performing heteronormatively, will decrease the risk of homophobia, and increase acceptance within the homosocial environment. This is not to say acceptance will not occur if a feminised masculinity exists, it is simply faster and easier to deal with.

The final Subordinate Theme '**Performing in Sporting-Footwear: Shaping Homosocial Masculine Bonds, The Walk/Feet/Shoes Triad**', (5.3.1.4), unveiled an alternative approach and insight to this homosocial space. The sporting-shoe/social-sporting shoe was considered an embodied performative space as an extension of masculinity. It was clearly expressed through the data that brightly coloured sport-footwear would result in violence and provocation on the pitch. The role of colour extended this embodied social space, into the character and role of masculine agency worn by the performative sportsman. White and black are considered a traditional but accepted form of masculine hegemonic representation. However, if you wear brightly coloured shoes, and can fill that embodied space and perform well, exceptionally well, you are given free licence to wear them without fear of homophobic labelling. As previously stated 'the signifiers that are represented on the pitch and in social environments, by performing masculinities in chosen boots/trainers, are extensions of institutionalised regimes of footwear and their associated power within masculine social structures'.

In conclusion, it is hoped that thorough the exposure of these themes and a closely interwoven narrative, the ability to utilise Masculinity Theory, Queer Theory and Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis have given these themes a deep and insightful, lived snapshot of the male sportsmen and their experiences of homosocial environments in sport. The role of masculinity and sexuality has been at the forefront of discussion, while most notably contributing to already concrete theory such as Masculine Capital. It is hoped that this body of work demonstrates that links between embodiment, masculinity, sexuality, and that footwear are at the essence of masculine performativity on the playing field.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **DISCUSSION, IMPLICATIONS, REFLECTIONS AND CONCLUDING STATEMENTS**

#### **6.1 Introduction**

In this final Chapter the key findings of this body of work will be presented. These findings will be explored in relation to the Primary Research Questions presented in Chapter 1 (1.3), the literature presented in Chapter 2, and the key themes presented in Chapter 5 (5.2); please refer to Table 3, (5.1.2).

Once the findings have been presented, this concluding Chapter will reflect upon original contribution to knowledge, by considering three distinct areas of impact. These include Theoretical Contribution (6.3.1), Methodological Contribution (6.3.2) and Empirical Contribution (6.3.3). A critical reflective approach will be taken to review four essential areas of limitations: Methods (6.4.1), Methodology (6.4.2), Epistemological Stances (6.4.3), the Role of the Researcher (6.4.4).

Implications of this research will then be discussed (6.5), where concluding remarks, and further research and recommendations will be indicated (6.6). Final concluding remarks tying this body of work to a close will be stated (6.7).

#### **6.2 Key findings Exposed in Relation to the Primary Research Questions and Literature**

Before discussing the findings, it is helpful to revisit the Primary Research Questions (PRQ's). These are:

- PRQ1: What is the relationship between masculine embodiment and the homosocial sporting environment?
- PRQ2: In the homosocial sporting environment, what role does heteronormativity play in policing masculine embodiment?

- PRQ3: Is it possible to divide the foot/shoe wearing dyad; is the 'appearance' and the 'essence' of the foot and shoe separable?
- PRQ4: What is the relationship between masculine embodiment and sports shoes?
- PRQ5: How can Queered masculinity help us to understand the role of Masculine Capital in homosocial sporting environments?

These research questions will be answered in the following sections, with alignment to the relevant literature and the supporting themes from Chapter 5. New sources are used to support additional findings which were not present in the original conception of this thesis.

### **6.2.1 Muscle 'bulk': A product of Embodiment, Agency, and the Policed Aesthetic Gaze**

Through analysis of the data, three Primary Research Questions are encapsulated in this research finding. Here PRQ1 and PRQ2 will be exposed, PRQ 5 plays a minimal role here, since homosociality is integral to Queer Theory.

The data revealed that muscle bulk was a product of understanding the masculine body in homosocial environments. The biggest, most pumped, muscular men received the greatest adoration from other men, heterosexual and homosexual alike. The regulation of the body and the production of muscle bulk was a result of the homosocial policed environment, e.g. men watching (aesthetic gaze) and policing other men's bodies. Queering masculinity in this study empowers ostracised masculinities to be present within a heteronormative environment, an environment in which they are normally marginalised. Queering in this way brings to light discourses and experiences of masculinity that have previously been overlooked.

Moreover, this data indicates that heteronormativity plays a major role in shaping homosocial environments. In addition, these environments exist whereby

heteronormativity is the only accepted 'norm'. Men affect how masculine embodiment is controlled and normalised in accordance with these heteronormative values, reinforcing this accepted norm. For example, drawing on the data, we may remember Philip - a homosexual participant – who recalled using his body and developing muscles within the locker room environment, to impress other heterosexual boys. They believed he was conforming to heterosexual expectations of the embodied normal. In contrast Alan, another participant, chose to change privately in a toilet so that other boys couldn't see his body. His behaviour was therefore seen as homosexualised within the heteronormative environment, and as such he was seen as an outcast.

During the interviews, participants' discourses on muscle 'bulk' became central to the analysis and became a focus in the production of the thematic data.

It is evident in the literature that this theme aligns with current knowledge existing within the muscular embodied context. With this in mind, it is important to reflect upon Watsons' (2000) statement whereby he suggests that embodiment is agency and structure realised, indicating that each person has an independent role in engaging in the social structures of society. To add to this, and the relationship between muscle and embodiment, Simpson (1994) turns to the concept of the passive aesthetic gaze whereby 'bulked' bodies within the homosocial setting are the result of commodification and valorisation as male bodies become fearful of the trivialisation of masculinity.

Reflecting further on the research findings, it is the biceps, chest, shoulders and legs, which appear to be of most significance to the interviewed participants. It is well documented in literature that 'substantial shoulders, wide, hard pectoral muscles, large biceps and thick forearms, a rippled abdomen, smaller muscular buttocks, strapping thighs, and bulky calves' (Pronger, 1990, p.156) are the hegemonic embodiment of masculinity.

This concept of masculinity is entrenched within the ideology of the masculine biceps, and Glassner (1989, p.253) states that 'muscles are the sign of masculinity'. The emergent biceps discourse as presented by the participants is often found in sporting communities. The pumped muscle bicep is often associated with violence, in particular vivid connotations of war, power and dominance. Indeed the biceps have metonymic qualities, often being referred to as 'guns' (Klein, 1993), as did research participant Frankie, for instance.

Little insight is needed to make a connection between the biceps as 'guns' with war, maleness and violence: a literal metaphor. These 'battle' qualities prove their dominating virtues over weaker men, women and homosexuals, fulfilling a hegemonic model of dominance (Price and Parker, 2003). Klein (1993) reflects on the 'male linguistic construction' of bodybuilding (of particular significance within an IPA study), and notes that language is often combative within sporting cultures. This is particularly significant when taking the research questions into account, particularly as language used will have an impact on shaping homosocial environments, notably sporting environments. This implication of hegemonic masculinity through language and metaphor will shape masculine embodiment.

Comic-book masculinity frequently utilises the role of the bicep and warfare, simply because it embodies hegemony. Comic heroes embody the force and power of the bicep, they are the entrenched heroes indoctrinated into childhood masculine fantasy. Jefferson (1998) considers the concept of men learning to 'embody force', by tightening their muscles, and specifically by flexing their biceps, they embody a masculine strut and identify themselves with 'he-man' (p.78) qualities. Klein (1993) reiterates the correlation of masculinity and muscles in this way by suggesting that comic masculinity is the embodiment of machismo: heteronormative, hegemonic, and bound in social structures.



In contrast, Simpson (1994), discusses the homoerotic nature of He-Man and the fact that he wears a tiny thong, he is physically beautiful and possesses an all-powerful sword, and when he wants to become more powerful, he raises his sword to the air and shouts 'I have the power', which spurts white lightening from its tip. Simpson (1994) makes it clear that the sword is an extension of his bicep, and the sword is also a metaphor for his ejaculating penis. Simpson is not the only author to have considered the link between biceps and penis discourse; Pronger (1990) in his social ethnographic research spoke to athletes who compared pumped up arms to a pumped up penis, and the participants in this study felt there was a vascularity that was similar between these two muscles. The discussion of the penis/cock in the homosocial setting is discussed in more detail in the next point (6.2.2), but the penis has a significant impact in shaping and masculinity in homosocial environments.

The bicep in this instance achieves qualities associated with Masculine Capital (Anderson, 2005a; De Visser *et al.* 2009; David and Brannon, 1976), demonstrating that a) 'I am a sturdy oak', b) 'I could 'give em hell' if I wanted to', and c) indicates physical prowess. Wellard (2009) supports this notion that biceps display physical prowess, but calls it 'masculine prowess...which can be presented through bodily performance' (p.59). Wellard (2009) cites Bourdieu (1977) and provides an extension to this concept by suggesting that through this display of Masculine Capital, the voyeur can see the dedication to the 'working out' process presented by the bicep, allowing the gym-goer to gain physical capital also; this physical capital is then converted into other forms of cultural and social capital.

The engaged (bodily aware) audience will be cogniscent of the discipline and commitment needed to create the bicep-bound body and, through this, Masculine Capital, hegemony and heteronormativity thrive in existence over the subordinate cultures and groups. Anderson (2005a), provides interesting testimony to this by arguing that those with greater Masculine Capital, also have

greater social agency and influence; this would mean that those with greater capital would be able to influence the behaviours and thinking of the subordinate groups, empowering them with a modicum of Masculine Capital. In line with the results from this body of work, it is suggested that those men who embody pumped muscles, also have greater influence in the homosocial sporting environments. In addition the pumped muscular form is a symbol of heteronormativity, and thus the desired, powerful, body ideal. This means that heterosexual men must police and enforce pumped muscles, so that this form of masculine embodiment is considered to be the only accepted heteronormative norm.

Nonetheless, the homosocial structures that appear to police subordinate masculinities are under threat. This work suggests that there is only enough Masculine Capital to be shared amongst subordinate masculinities, before it impacts on hegemonic masculinity and heteronormativity. Dominant forms of masculinity would fear the disappearance of binary order, as it would alter the balance of their dominance at the top of their homosocially understood hierarchy. This is most significantly understood from a Queer Theoretical perspective.

This would suggest that the biceps and the muscular form always need to be bigger and bigger, and more pumped, and that Masculine Capital must shift on a continuum, which is very similar to the temporal existence of our bodies in time and the view of participants in this study.

Referring back to the primary research questions it can be argued that the relationship between masculine embodiment and homosocial sporting environments does depend on muscular bulk. The pumped body is policed and admired by both heterosexual and homosexual men alike, with heterosexual men maintaining the heteronormative roles, while homosexual men challenge

this embodied relationship and use it as a mask of sexuality, or as a strategy of gaining Masculine Capital.

In other words, several things are happening here. Men's behaviour in the homosocial environment changes to that of the voyeuristic gaze. Men are then looking around the homosocial locker room to gauge the size of the muscular bodies, taking stock of the biggest, and in this environment/example, most masculine. Ultimately, this is all dependent on the pumped size of the muscles present at any particular moment in time. The consequence of this, as men come and go from the locker room, is that the relationship between homosocial environments and masculine bodies also changes.

Most muscular bodies are admired by all men that visit that homosocial sporting environment, with heterosexual men claiming it to be a true heteronormative masculine quality. Heterosexual men therefore have a desire to encourage and police what is understood to be a heterosexual body. It could be argued that this body of work indicates that homosexual men, against the knowing belief of heterosexual men, use pumped muscles to hide or mask homosexuality. This enables homosexual men to cheat qualities of heterosexuality, and thus fool the rules of a policed homosocial setting.

This research also suggests that in homosocial sporting environments, heteronormativity is fundamental in shaping the masculine bodied experience. Heteronormativity appears to be an indoctrinated learnt role in homosocial environments, in which the pumped bicep is the bridge, maintaining the two pillars of masculinity in sporting environments. Reflecting upon violence and the body in the analysed data (5.2.1.3), this thesis indicates that there is a learnt relationship between masculinity, violence and heteronormativity in homosocial sporting environments. Violence appears to be the learnt tool through which men understand heteronormative relationships, which in turn leads them to learn how

to shape their bodies accordingly. Ultimately, the bigger the bicep the harder the punch, which gains respect, capital, and the aesthetic gaze.

Masculine Capital and its links to embodiment, homosociality and heteronormativity, appear to be major factors, interlinking both PRQ1 and PRQ2. PRQ5 has been considered here in relation to the body and Masculine Capital, but further discussion regarding this research question will be considered in (6.2.2)

In conclusion, it is hoped through embedding this research further into the literature, that demonstration is given to the power of the 'bulked' muscle, particularly the biceps within this embodied male context. The fact that embodiment is agency and structure realised (Watson, 2000), highlights the fragile and temporal nature of muscle bound bodies in sport, and the individual choice to be 'bulk' those bodies and be the product of power and disenfranchisement as the passive aesthetic gaze comes to the fore. Simultaneously, the struggle to gain Masculine Capital and be hegemonically 'safe' within the sporting community, means that muscle is a form of Masculine Capital currency trade (Fussell, 1991) which, through agency and commodification, can be exchanged for the most dominant form of masculine credit: the aesthetic gaze of other men. In this research it appears the bigger the muscles are in the homosocial sporting environment, the safer you are from homophobic discourse, providing you with immunity from hegemonic doubt.

### **6.2.2 Cock-Supremacy: The New Tenet of Masculine Capital, Power via a New Purchase Privilege**

Through analysis of the data, Primary Research Question 5 will be answered here. By gaining insight into the utilisation of Queer Theory, how has Queering masculinity helped us to understanding the role of Masculine Capital in homosocial sporting environments?' In addition, it is felt that by answering this research question, PRQ1 and 2 have some involvement in this theme's

conclusion. To remind us, these are ‘what is the relationship between masculine embodiment and the homosocial sporting environment?’ and, ‘in the homosocial sporting environment, what role does heteronormativity play in policing masculine embodiment?’

The analysis of the data revealed that Masculine Capital is an accurate model of understanding how men shape their lives in homosocial sporting environments. However, if we Queer masculinity and give marginalised masculinities a voice, such as the participants in this study, we find that there is a new, undiscovered tenet of masculinity within this model: Cock-Supremacy.

The data suggests that a large penis, in homosocial sporting discourse, brings with it considerable power, and to that extent it informs Queered masculinity. In a normal hierarchal structure, those men with a large cock are readily spoken about in homosocial discourse. This means, by Queering Cock in this context, we are giving men with a small penis, the opportunity to speak out about their lived experience. This body of work also considers the average-sized penis to be subordinate to the large-sized penis in this homosocial sporting context.

This research reveals that the privileges and power associated with a large cock include masculine hegemony, enjoying homosocial bodily celebration, being revered by other men, and heteronormative immunity from the suspicion of homosexuality.

Queering cock within this context, allows less well-endowed homosexual and heterosexual men with access to some of those heteronormative power privileges. Nonetheless, the size of cock has no direct link to sexuality, and participants in this study were aware of that. This indicates that in actual fact the pumped cock (as were pumped muscles in embodiment) is an excellent façade or mask for disguising sexuality.

This body of work indicates that a large penis provides a vast amount of leverage in the homosocial sporting context. For example participants in this study reported that sportsmen who were poor performers of their chosen sport, but had a large cock, were forgiven for their sporting failures. This was mainly due to the fact that the sportsman with the large penis was seen as an iconic figure who, through banter and camaraderie, socially bound the team together. In addition, those men with a smaller cock benefitted from the association with a well endowed teammate as a form of Masculine Capital credit.

This body of work is pleased to argue that a large penis is power via a new purchase privilege, regardless of sexuality and heteronormative boundaries.

Insight can be gleaned from literature, the analysis and the superordinate themes produced in Chapter 5.

The discourses surrounding Masculine Capital (Anderson, 2009b; David and Brannon, 1976; De Visser and Smith, 2006) has taken a prevalent role within this body of work. It can be suggested that this research correlates with previous discourses and literature regarding Masculine Capital, the identified tenets of hegemonic masculinity, and its role in enforcing and maintaining homophobic attitudes.

The tenets of Masculine Capital have been stated continuously throughout this thesis. To reiterate, these include '(1) no sissy stuff; (2) be a big wheel; (3) be a sturdy oak; and (4) give em hell' (David and Brannon, 1976, p.12). De visser *et al.* (2009, p.1049) also adds, '(1) Physical Prowess; (2) a lack of vanity; (3) sexuality and (4) Alcohol use'. In relation to the concept of Masculine Capital, is it important to highlight that the role of the penis doesn't currently exist within this framework and as such this body of work has provided a new construction of this theory.

Therefore, leading up to the analysis and results of this research data, it is significant to reflect upon some of the literature acknowledging that penis size has a large impact on the negotiation and symbolic representation of masculinity in the homosocial setting. The penis (or 'Cock' as it is referred to in this research) is also a model through which men exchange power and empower masculinity between men, forming powerful bonds and models of masculinised culture. For example, this body of work found that mockery and micky-taking was a way of exchanging power between men. By mocking and disempowering men with a small penis, this ultimately empowers the large-cocked individual. Another example might be, when a sports team of men gather socially for the night, the data suggested that, through banter, men with a large penis were celebrated in front of women, demonstrating bonds of masculinity and exchanging empowered masculinity. It also highlighted a code of heteronormativity, through masculine bonding in front of women.

Interpreting the participants' interviews demonstrated that penis discourse was as a key theme in homosocial sporting environments. This demonstrated a gap in Masculine Capital Theory, allowing for a new and undiscovered tenant, it was here that Cock-Supremacy was realised and easily integrated into Masculine Capital.

It is through this research, utilising Queer Theory and Queering masculinity, (Primary Research Question 5) that the role of cock in Masculinity Capital has become a prevalent new finding and addition to this theoretical construct.

Reviewing the literature, Pronger (1990) discusses the importance of cock and masculinity, he suggests that a large penis is the 'ultimate sign of masculinity, as it attests to its power, potency and rigour' (p.161). Simpson (1994, p.4) supports this hegemonic interpretation of the penis, as a 'Patriarchal signifier, the symbol of male power', while, Connell (1995) reports that, the cock, invokes metonymic qualities, which is suggested to be a key symbolic vision amongst sporting

masculine men. This could be considered within a cyclic fashion, whereby one invoking image of masculinity within a metonymic context provokes the cock and visa versa.

It should be clarified that discussion of the cock within the data refers to that of a flaccid cock, rather than of an erect one. If an erect cock was discussed within the homosocial context it would change its understanding and meaning. Therefore, Brod (1995, p.395) suggests it is not only the size of the cock that matters, but also that fact that 'penile performance as an index of male strength and potency directly contradicts biological facts'.

Brod (1995) continues to argue that in actual fact the erect cock is simply a chamber of erectile tissue filled under localised high blood pressure. What we are considering here is the biopolitics of the penis (Maddison, 2009), whereby the male role of the cock within a cultural setting, competes within the knowledge of the cock's physiological function, probably indicating that phallus power ('the patriarchal signifier, the symbol of male power') (Simpson, 1994, p.14) has less worth. In the previous section, (6.2.1), it was presented that the penis and the biceps are considered to have similar qualities; here it could be argued that there is a metonymic relationship between pumped biceps (muscles) and the pumped penis; this is very similar to work supported by Simpson (1994).

Moving on and considering this concept within the homosocial sporting setting, Eng, (2006a) argues from a Queer perspective that homosocial spaces are non-sexualised and that, by having single-sex locker rooms, they have an ability to diffuse sexual acts and voyeurism of other men. However, it is considered that through the homosocial locker room, homosexuality exists silently and unspoken.

It could be argued here that Queering masculinity, this body of work, in relation to the research questions, disagrees with these concepts and actually reinforces the significance and performative role that voyeurism plays in the homosocial



environment. If you Queer masculinity in relation to Masculine Capital, it could almost be suggested that the locker room is now a safe place to 'look'.

In this body of work, by looking at other men's cocks within the homosocial setting i.e. in the locker room, participants (heterosexual and homosexual) were able to gauge, discuss and valorise men who have the largest cock. The theme presented in this work, interprets that men in the homosocial locker room environment compare and valorise each other's penises to expose who has the largest 'cock'. It appears that the homosocial locker room is the initiator of a process of male bonding by way of non-erotic comparison, devoid of sexual preference. Here, this process of voyeurism, awareness, agency and exposure of cock size is a male bonding process, through which power is exchanged between men, to allow one man to have omnipotence over all the other men by the size of his cock. This process is often treated with humour and banter, but this heteronormative role of male bonding appears to allow truths to be heard between men, and it is often stated 'bigger is better'. These men are then valorised, praised and revered in and out of the homosocial setting once a hegemonic male of the group is found. Finally to reiterate, in relation to sexuality, this body of work found that regardless of sexuality, homosexual and heterosexual men alike participated in the process of ascribing power to a large cock in the homosocial environment.

Bringing this concept to a close, it is significant to consider the impact that this has on men with small cocks. Pronger (1990) does suggest that even though the large penis is associated with masculinity, there is an unjust reasoning, that men with a small penis have no choice in the matter, because it is genetically predetermined, and are therefore considered less potent or traditionally masculine. He does suggest that men that are trying to cash in on masculinity with small penises are purchasing the 'symbolic power of mythic masculinity' rather than true superordinate forms of masculinity. Very similarly, this body of work found that men who have smaller penises and were bonded with other men

in the homosocial locker room, gained credit by associating with the Cock-Supremacy torch bearer.

In conclusion, it is suggested that having a large penis honours these men with an automatic power to gain new Masculine Capital privileges. This concept means that a large cock carries considerable weight over other the other tenets of Masculine Capital. Therefore, former hegemonic masculine men in sport could be shifted down a homosocially understood hierarchy, for less traditionally hegemonic males with a large cock. This research found that by having a large cock, you gained a significant amount of masculine credit whereby your performance could be substandard but you are still revered in the homosocial locker room setting. The process of men with small cocks, valorising and consuming the large cock discourse, creates the power shifts of exchanging masculinity, but also provides them with a form of 'mythic masculinity'. Therefore, it can most definitely be argued that Cock-Supremacy is a powerful model of male culture, and a justifiable addition to the tenets of Masculine Capital.

It can be concluded that through Queering masculinity in the homosocial sporting setting, we have been able to further dismantle the relationship that exists in this environment. New ways of accepting and understanding Masculine Capital, which is driven by Queer Theory and the unheard masculine voices, fills a gap in current thinking and supports Primary Research Question 5.

### **6.2.3 Sporting-Footwear and Social-Sporting-Footwear: The Embodied Podolinguistic Relationship**

Through analysis of the data, two Primary Research Questions will be answered: PRQs 3 and 4.

The analysis of the data revealed that there is a significant relationship between masculine embodiment and the sports shoes that men choose to put on their feet in homosocial sporting environments, and these have been called 'sporting-

footwear'. The footwear choices that men make extend the homosocial sporting environment, and where they have extended further into the general social setting, have been named 'social-sporting-footwear'. Through the interpretive process, this research found that men's masculine embodiment is directly connected to their choice of sporting-footwear and social-sporting-footwear.

This research indicated that there are social podolinguistic signifiers, which have both positive and negative connotations for interpretation by other sporting men. It was felt that wearing brightly coloured sporting-footwear was a statement of 'peacocking', in other words a demonstration of hegemonic sporting ability. Wearing these colours would lead to damage and/or violence from other sportsmen to prove that the podolinguistic language was in fact incorrect.

The participants stated that brightly coloured sporting-footwear also had connotations of homosexuality, by creating a stigma, and indicating that the chastised sportsman embodied a subordinate masculinity. His sporting-footwear would continue to demonstrate this podolinguistically, until he could prove otherwise through embodied performativity on the sports field. With experience and age, many sportsmen concluded that it was traditional to wear black and white sporting-footwear, and a 'safe' podolinguistic signifier of a form of hegemonic masculinity.

This research also found, in line with Primary Research Question 3, that it wasn't possible to divide up the foot/shoe dyad within the sporting arena. This was due to the fact that participants experienced a triadic relationship, involving walking, rather than just the feet and shoes. Therefore the 'essence' of the footwear/shoes included walking, and how it shaped performative masculinity. It could be suggested that the 'appearance' or 'hidden meaning' in this relationship was the newly discovered implication in this relationship. The research indicates that the foot/shoe/walk triad is evidently shaped by heteronormative practices, and impact on homosocial interaction, as presented within Chapter 5.

Insight will now be taken from literature, the analysis and the superordinate themes produced in Chapter 5.

Discourses in this body of work surrounding the meanings of sporting-footwear and social-sporting-footwear in relation to masculinity are new and under researched areas of knowledge.

Rossi (1977) is one of the only academics to consider the role of the foot and shoe as a signifier of personality and emotions and he coined this language 'Podolinguistics' and 'Podopsychosomatics' (Rossi, 1977, p.237-243), (previously discussed in 2.4 and 2.5).

In brief, Podolinguistics and Podopsychosomatics are the language represented through our footwear; these could be our physical, emotional, psychological and psychosexual attitude (Rossi, 1977, p.241-250). These seminal concepts have been overlooked over the past thirty-five years, and it is without doubt that these philosophies should be reintroduced back into the sociological setting. This work has demonstrated that the sporting-shoe has been an effective medium through which to introduce this concept. This research also indicates that through embedding Podolinguistics within an epistemological and theoretical framework, it has strengthened this concept for future use.

More recently if you consider footwear as an object of clothing, Bech (1997), reports that one can gain insight into how one models themselves or relates to oneself as a man. Frith and Gleeson (2004) considered the role of embodiment, clothing and masculinity and found this relationship was intricately complex. Shoes were discussed within their study, and it appeared that men simply wished to wear shoes that made them appear taller and more muscular.

Furthering this idea of footwear as a form of clothing, Filliault and Drummond (2009) cite Skidmore (1999) in their research of gay male athletes and clothing who stated that 'gay men may dress differently at work so as to fit in with what is perceived to be a straight, heteronormative atmosphere' (p.180). This is similar to findings in this study whereby footwear is worn to appear traditionally normal, or heterosexual.

Reflecting on the literature (2.3), insight was given to the existence of the foot and shoe embodied within a dyadic relationship (Rossi, 1977; Steele, 1996; 2005). However, considering the data gathered from this research, the foot and shoe dyad has been reframed and has now been reinterpreted to exist in a triadic relationship; this relationship now includes the role of walking. Rossi (1977) does reflect on the fact that walking could be considered to play a part in Podolinguistics. Therefore, the research theme 'Performing in Sporting-Footwear: Shaping Homosocial Masculine Bonds, The Walk/Feet/Shoes Triad' (5.3.1.4), supports this early assumption made by Rossi. It is also evident that Alan's experiences in theme 5.3.1.4, identify the role of walking and homophobic abuse. Alan's embodied podolinguistic signifiers to other men suggested homosexuality, and this became an issue whereby Alan desired to change his walk, to a more heterosexual gait.

Tying this all up in relation to the walk/feet/shoes triad, and the role of sporting-shoes/social-sporting-shoes and the homosocial podolinguistic environment, it was felt that humour was one of the main vehicles through which most men's footwear in sport was discussed. Humour is often a vehicle through which men learn to be intimate and exchange thoughts of honesty and truth; Kidd (1987) refers to this role of intimate banter, mockery and horseplay as 'The Roast' (p.259). It can be suggested that from this body of work, homosociality and 'The Roast' have an evident relationship in defining masculinity and shaping the feet/walk/shoes triad.

Taking all these relationships and the literature into consideration, this thesis argues that the sporting-shoe and social-sporting-shoe are considered representations of masculinity. Through homosocial interaction and male bonding, representations of masculine performativity are represented through podolinguistics.

Reflecting on podolinguistic discourses of brightly coloured sporting-footwear as a result of homosociality in sport, these can be interpreted as symbols of confidence, and excellent hegemonic performativity. However, these readings are as a result of demonstrations of performative skill. On a superficial podolinguistic level, brightly coloured boots can be interpreted as weakness, cockiness, homosexuality and femininity, until performance proves otherwise. There are in Queer terms podolinguistic representation of male bonding, 'the roast' and homophobic agency.

Podolinguistic representations of the colours black and white in the homosocial sporting-shoe context are interpreted with connotations of tradition, knowledge, and even gang culture.

One participant in this study, referred to white social-sporting-shoes 'as a special kind of Englishness' another participant suggested that plainness in colour, 'identifies you as masculine, rather than the shoe defining you as masculine'. It could be suggested that white or black, the podolinguistic representations from a Queered homosocial perspective, are that of masculine agency, masculine bodies/performance and fear of a 'homophobic roasting'. Through choosing this colour, men are suggesting that they are heterosexual, homosocially secure, masculine and de-emphasising any form of Queer.

In concluding, it is evident that never before has literature been used to underpin the concepts of podolinguistics in the homosocial sporting setting. It is clear that new horizons have been unveiled as to the meaning of colour and traditional

colour in relation to sporting-shoes and social-sporting-shoes. The body of work has contributed clear findings to suggest that in relation to sport and the performative relationship to feet and shoes, walking is integral to that podolinguistic discourse. Finally, without the epistemological underpinnings of homosociality and Queer Theory, the interpretations of these podolinguistic messages would have been far more superficial. This research argues that there is a far better understanding of the relationship between masculine embodiment and sports shoes (PRQ4) as well as constructing a new understanding of the dyadic relationship between the foot and shoe (PRQ3).

### **6.3 Original Contribution to Knowledge**

This body of work has in its approach strategically planned to deliver an original contribution to knowledge. Taking a critical approach, the originality of this research will now be discussed, giving learnt insight gained from undertaking this research in masculinity in sport. This includes Theoretical Contribution (6.3.1), Methodological Contribution (6.3.2) and Original Empirical Contribution (6.3.3).

#### **6.3.1 Theoretical Contribution**

The primary theoretical contribution is the utilisation of Masculinity Theory and Queer Theory (both epistemologically and theoretically) in this body of work.

Masculinity Theory and its application to sports sociology studies is not a particularly new concept. However, the use of Queer Theory is very under utilised within sports empirical studies; one need only look at the Chapter 3 dedicated to Queer Theory and the limited sports literature embedded within that Chapter. The most significant contribution to knowledge is the combining of these two theories in one body of work. It could be legitimately argued that, at times, these two opposing epistemological stances highlight a discord within a piece of research such as this. However, this thesis has utilised Masculinity Theory to highlight binaries within homosocial environmental structures e.g. the locker room; while

Queer Theory has dismantled binaries, giving a voice to marginalised masculinities which help to expose the politics of men's shared lives.

### **6.3.2 Original Methodological Contribution**

In methodological terms, utilising Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) in a sports masculinity study contributes a new interpretive perspective never utilised in empirical research before. IPA provides an in-depth approach to analysing data, whereby the researcher is at the core of the analysis. Reflecting on the key concepts of IPA, the utilisation of interpretation, hermeneutic and idiography (the triadic ontology for IPA), are seldom seen as the methodological direction for a sports and masculinity study. It is worth remembering that through this methodological approach, the ability to give the participants a true, lived voice, and the role that idiography plays in enabling this voice, at times gives one participant the 'moment' to be the focus of a thematic discussion. The ability to consider metaphor, language and abstract symbolic imagery are also a unique trait of an IPA sports study. In a sports/masculinity study, the data produced is detailed, has depth, and is truthful, which is at the core of original methodological contribution to knowledge.

### **6.3.3 Original Empirical Contribution**

In empirical terms this is the first study to consider masculinity with regarding to performativity and the embodied role of footwear in sport. Though the interview and analysis process, it was evident that the participants' voices needed a narrative foundation to be able to reflect upon masculinity of the body, to enable the participants to locate their views within the walk/feet/shoes triadic relationship.

As previously stated, the overall epistemological, methodological and theoretical framework of this sports/masculinity study, is to give a voice to marginalised homosexual and heterosexual men in the homosocial sporting settings. This is evidently unique and an original contribution to original empirical knowledge.



## **6.4 Limitations and Reflections**

This section considers the limitations of the current body of work, by reflecting upon the Methods (6.4.1), Methodology (6.4.2), the Combining of Epistemological Stances (6.4.3), and finally, the role of the researcher (6.4.4). Each of these points will now be deliberated in turn.

### **6.4.1 Limitations and Reflections on Methods**

Reflecting on the methods of this research study, it could be indicated that there are four areas that could be considered limitations, (i) recruitment of participants, (ii) interview methods, (iii) interview technique, and (iv) the name of the researcher; these will each be briefly discussed in turn.

Firstly, reflecting upon the 'recruitment of participants' in method terms, the posters were hung at the Stratford campus at the University of East London, in the hope that this would attract heterosexual male sporting participants. The same posters were emailed to a wide variety of homosexual male sports teams/clubs (as detailed in Chapter 4 and subsection 4.4), with the aim of recruiting homosexual participants. It could be suggested that targeting participants in this way fulfils a preconception of who would be willing to volunteer and take part in the study, and could generalise the quality of the data. Taking this recruitment approach, it might be indicative of an attitude that there may not be enough homosexual sporting participants residing at the UEL Stratford campus. In the researcher's experience, there appeared to be a small community of homosexual men at UEL, however a wider recruitment did provide the number of participants required for the study. It could also be argued that recruiting from one fixed location e.g. UEL would fulfil a more harmonious clarity to term homogenous sample of participants as indicated by Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009). The homogenous view is clearly adequate within the study, e.g., men, homosexual, heterosexual, experience in sport, with the one exception i.e. the varied location from which the participants were recruited.

Secondly, from a method's standpoint, it could have been useful to ask the participants to return for a second interview, i.e. a follow up interview. This would have required fewer participants, but from an Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis perspective, it could have allowed an alternate deeper perspective of embodiment, and the role of temporality might have taken a more idiographic perspective. It could be interpreted that the narrative of male embodiment and this notion of temporality (which is discussed in the analysis (5.0)) might have become a greater feature of the thematic data, if the methods had allowed the temporal performativity of change within the participants' perspectives, to come to the narrative inception.

Thirdly, it could also be argued that in actual fact allowing Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis to perform its intended function, it at times allowed participants to truthfully fulfil their desire to express their lived perspective of reality and their in depth lived lives. This does fulfil the epistemological and ontological desire of a phenomenological enquiry, although allowing the participant to have such free speech can and will guide the interview schedule into new and previously under discussed areas. This is obviously the whole point of qualitative research, but it can be, in this instance at times reflect areas of potential limitation.

Fourth and finally, the name of the principle researcher did have an impact on the methods of the research; initially this issue, for a short period, limited the recruitment of homosexual participants. Chris Morris (with one s') is the name of a well-known British satirist, who created a series called 'Brass Eye', which mocked contentious issues such as paedophilia, sex and crime. A few of the homosexual sports clubs I contacted by email were concerned that I could be the said Chris Morris, and whilst they were provided with ethics papers and information for participant letters agreed by the University, they were not willing to correspond further. It could be argued that in this instance I limited my own study as, unfortunately, the researcher is central to all areas in a qualitative piece such

as this. Whilst there was an option for the researcher to undertake a pseudonym, this was felt to ethically jeopardise the methods of the body of work.

#### **6.4.2 Limitations and Reflections on Methodology**

Methodologically, it could be suggested through critique of the thesis, that two limitations are present in this body of work. These include (i) the design of interview questions as a semi-structured interview and (ii) sexuality and recruitment of a homogenous sample. These will now be discussed in turn.

To begin it could be suggested that the design of the interview questions limited the scope of the interview, as previously discussed in (6.4.1). However, since the ontological stance of IPA allows participants to follow their desired narratives, it might have been better, if a more rigid/structured interview schedule was introduced after the reflections from the initial pilot study. This approach might have guided the participants into more predetermined areas, which would be able to fulfil research questions such as those considering the walk/feet/shoes triad. Even though this study did include the triad as a Subordinate Theme, during the planning and developmental stages of this body of work, it was preconceived that this would be a Superordinate Theme rather than a Subordinate one. The chosen methodological approach allows participants in part, to guide the research agenda. With this in mind, and even though the principle researcher chose to encourage the participants to discuss the feet/shoes/walk triad, participants emphasised the importance of self-narratives in embodiment, sexuality and homophobic discourse. It could be said this in itself is the core to discovering the narratives of qualitative research. In tying up this methodological limitation, the possibility of using a more structured approach could have focussed the participants more accurately. On the other hand it could have limited the essence of IPA and the lived narratives exposed.

The second limitation in methodological terms could have been the choice to recruit both heterosexual and homosexual participants for this study. There is an

argument that having both heterosexual and homosexual participants is not a true example of homogenous sampling. If you were to extend this example, it might have been more insightful to have only recruited either heterosexual or homosexual sporting men, which would appease the notion of homogeneity but might also have impacted on the value of the narratives produced. It could also have reduced the level of discussion needed when referring to participants that are either 'heterosexual' or 'homosexual', as the study would have known it was one homogenous group or the other. This could also indicate a purer example of an Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis study.

#### **6.4.3 Limitations and Reflection on Combining Epistemological Stances**

Reflecting on limitations epistemologically there is potentially one area that could be highlighted, and this is the utilisation and alignment of both Masculinity Theory and Queer Theory.

Reflecting back on the literature utilised in this body of work, it could be identified that Masculinity Theory and the associated integrated concepts of Hegemonic Masculinity and Masculine Capital (2.2.2) reinforce the philosophies of hegemony, binaries and relegation of subordinate masculinities. This reinforcement is what could be highlighted as a limitation, since this is exactly what Queer Theory is at odds with, and it could be suggested this is why Queer Theory was developed in the first place, to give subordinate masculinities, such as homosexual masculinities, a voice. To reiterate the success of this mode of theoretical integration, and to alleviate any concern, these theories were utilised as such; Masculinity Theories were enabled to highlight areas of subordination, binary and hegemony, while Queer Theory was put in place to deconstruct and dismantle these normalising structures, while giving denied or silenced bodies a voice. It is hoped that through the analysis of this body of work, and the formulation of this discussion/conclusion Chapter, reinforcement of this model of

combining these two theories demonstrates, that this is a minor limitation, and raises little cause for concern.

#### **6.4.4 Limitations and Reflections on the Role of the Researcher**

It is important to consider the role of the researcher, as an academic, a keen bodybuilder and a homosexual man. These lived perspectives of the researcher's life call into question the researcher's potential bias and personal interpretation of the analysis of discourses presented by participants in this study. It is here that the role of reflexivity as discussed in Chapter 4, (4.7.2) in research terms is brought to the fore. As previously stated by Tindall (1994) the role of 'Personal Reflexivity' takes its place within the researcher's already busy schedule. This 'reveals' (Tindall, 1994, p.150) the researchers personal insight and involvement in the research, and their apparent 'situatedness' in the body of work. Firstly, it is hoped that through the opening personal narratives the readership is able to see the located positioning of the author, while gaining a level of trust and authenticity of their work.

Secondly, it is essential to know that the researcher sought time, and developed experience, in deciding on a methodology that supported a body of research such as this. It is essential to reconsider the role of the 'Double Hermeneutic Circle' (Smith Flowers and Larkin, 2009) in the methodological positioning of IPA; this stance takes significant steps towards acknowledging philosophy, epistemology, methodology and the centrality of the researcher. In this light the 'Double Hermeneutic Circle' involves the researcher interpreting the data, while in turn interpreting and reflecting insight on himself. During the whole process the researcher utilised reflective diaries (Burman, 1994; Tindall, 1994) to document, reflect and process procedural ideas, methodological developments and analytical thoughts. The use of spider diagrams and mind-mapping has been a particular feature of the reflective process, which has been particularly utilised in structuring the epistemological foundations of each theme and its structured argumentation.

Finally, it should also be stated that in support of embedding the researcher in the data and the ontological underpinnings of the research, it can be highlighted that the use of Queer Theory upkeeps this positive positioning. Reflecting once again, the researcher is a homosexual man, and the use of Queer Theory (though in reality could be used by any researcher), has been guided to be the theory of ontological positioning that is about Queers for the use of Queers; Morland and Willox (2005) add to this and state it should be utilised by the community it belongs to. It could be argued that this supporting positioning of the ontological and methodological position strengthens the whole body of work from methods, methodology, epistemology and the researcher.

## **6.5 Implications of Research**

Reflection and insight will now be given to three main areas that considered having 'implications of research'. These are Theoretical Perspectives (6.5.1), Implications of IPA Methodology (6.5.2) and thirdly the Embodiment of Feet and Shoes (6.5.3).

### **6.5.1 Theoretical Perspectives (Queer Theory and Masculinity Theory) and Sport**

Queer Theory has been extensively discussed and utilised in this body of work. Until Chaudwell (2006) edited and compiled the 'Sport, sexualities and queer/theory' series, very little research had been undertaken which enabled sport to be reframed within this context. King (2008) did re-approach this epistemological stance, by discussing developments and limitations in this area of Queer Theory and sports sociology. Nonetheless, what is important about this body of work is that it supports and at times confronts Queer Theory directly.

The inclusion of heterosexual and homosexual participants allows us to Queer both sexualities and narratives side by side, without the researcher sitting in a position of heteronormative power. By Queering masculinities and sexualities in

this way, embedding them within the homosocial sporting setting, the embodied realisation of structure and agency enabled the researcher to understand the role of 'bulked' muscle and the passive aesthetic. Queering the power relation of muscle in light of homoerotic gaze deconstructs and questions the hegemonic relationship between homosexual and heterosexual masculinities.

Implications of Queer Theory in light of these concepts, adds to the steadily emergent Queer Theory community of knowledge in sport. It allows us to 'see' Queered bodies in the homosocial setting whilst also giving us access to the transient and temporal axes of masculinity and sexuality.

The Masculinity Theory community, it could be argued, is relatively saturated with past (Connell, 1992; 1995; 1996; 2002; Messner, 1990; 1992; 1994; 1995) and present (Anderson, 2002; 2005a; 2005b; 2006a; 2006b; 2011, De Visser and Smith, 2006; De Visser, Smith and McDonnell, 2009) empirical studies on masculinities and sport. This body of work has provided a significant contribution to the Masculine Capital Model (David and Brannon, 1976; De Visser, Smith and McDonnell, 2009) with, 'Cock-Supremacy' and prides itself in adding this new and uniquely Queered tenet. The implication of this new addition to Masculine Capital encourages the review of former literature, in light of this new tenet and raises questions about its prior existence in sporting culture. It opens up the debate about future research and its implication in Masculinity Theory, and provides a platform for new theoretical debate around its new existence in knowledge.

In addition it could be suggested that future work could be implicated whereby the use of Masculinity Theory and Queer Theory co-exist more frequently in empirical research and literature pertaining to the male sporting community. The implications of this joint venture in an epistemological exchange indicate, potentially, a new critical knowledge of the deconstruction of subordinate groups and sexualities in sport. The implications for the future are the potential use of a

‘Queer Masculinity Theory’, a Theory that will have sprung from the deconstruction of masculine embodiment and homosocial environments in sport.

It could therefore be concluded that the key theoretical implications of this body of work, are those of a continued philosophical debate and its relation to masculinity, homosociality, embodiment, Queer Theory and Masculinity Theory.

### **6.5.2 IPA Methodology**

IPA methodology and its role within the research have highlighted some interesting implications of research. There are two suggested implications of methodological research, these are (i) IPA/Masculinity/Queer/Embodiment, and (ii) IPA and Sports Sociology. Each of these points will now be briefly discussed in turn.

The researcher’s choice to utilise an IPA methodology, and a Masculinity/Queer Theoretical perspective, has opened up new implications for the use of IPA, and gender/sports studies. Reflecting on the implications and the utilisation of IPA as an interpretive, hermeneutic, idiographic tool, this research has allowed Masculinity Theory to highlight interpreted binaries, and Queer Theory the ability to dismantle them and give new structural insight visibility. Giving IPA the opportunity to operate with taken-for-granted knowledge, locked up within the sports, sexuality and masculinities arena, Queer Theory has turned these binaries on their head and highlighted the refusal of heteronormative social constructions, and given an alternative lived interpretation for the participants’ experiences.

To add to the theoretical implications of IPA and the entrenched Masculinity/Queer Theories, it should be noted that this new combination of epistemologies has enabled this body of work to consider and deconstruct the homosociality of men in the sport setting, through an Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis lens. This operating of homosociality within these



constructs creates a new existence of knowledge that can encourage debate and, again, academic thought. This thesis hopes to spark contention and thinking, and to challenge new philosophical debate surrounding new combinations of philosophy and methodology.

Finally, Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) note that IPA and the role of embodiment have 'recently resurfaced across a range of qualitative approaches' (p.198), IPA being at the forefront of this resurgence. The implications of this statement suggest that this body of work is currently at the forefront of methodological debate and philosophical thinking. Regarding embodiment and IPA, this research demonstrated that through the embodied relationship of muscle 'bulk' within the homosocial setting, and the performative passivity of the men observing these muscles, IPA allowed this intersubjective relationship of power, subordination and agency to come to the fore, and be heard.

Moving on, and reflecting upon the implications of IPA and Sport, it is important to note that previous research involving this combination of methodology and such a sport sociology discipline are previously under-utilised and researched. IPA found its roots in psychology and in particular health psychology domain (De Visser and McDonald, 2007; Eatough and Smith, 2006a; Senior *et al.* 2002) and is starting to be utilised in other health-related academic spaces, such as nursing (Norlyk and Harder, 2010), nutrition (Fade, 2004) and palliative medicine (Jarrett *et al.* 1999) to name but a few. The fact that this methodological approach has found its foundations and application in the domain of psychology highlights its versatility and transferability to other disciplines. It could be suggested that after the publication of this research thesis, and the introduction of IPA into the sporting methodological domain, the positive implications of this would be, firstly the placing of IPA in the qualitative sporting methodological limelight, and secondly that it could persuade other/new researchers that this is a exemplar tool for qualitative research outside of psychology. As a result it is hoped that IPA will be used more frequently in sports sociology and possibly extended to other

academic contexts. This would result in further welcomed academic debate with regards to IPA and methodology.

Finally, it is only as a result of the positive 'interpretive omnipotent' attitude of Smith, Flowers and Larkin (2009) and their promotion of the widening utilisation and uptake of the IPA as a methodological analytical tool, that this research has found its true grounding.

### **6.5.3 Embodiment of Feet and Sporting-Shoes**

As a Podiatrist, an academic and a PhD researcher, new knowledge revolving around the sociological interpretive constructions of feet and shoes, are of particular significance. As previously stated in (6.4.1) and (6.4.2) it was hoped that the interpretation of performativity and the podolinguistic nature of feet and shoes would play an even larger role than the adequately sized theme which currently exists in this body of work (5.3.1.4) 'Performing in Sporting-Footwear: Shaping Homosocial Masculine Bonds, The Walk/Feet/Shoes Triad'.

This is the first piece of doctoral work embedded within such a broad variety of disciplines, which considers the role of footwear within the homosocial sporting setting. Reflecting back over the theme (5.3.1.4) there were some key thematic discussions, which evolved from the data that would demonstrate gaps in current theoretical thinking, and highlight areas of new research stemming from this work.

Firstly, it is apparent that there are unspoken podolinguistic signifiers built into the wearing of brightly colour sporting-footwear. As previously discussed, these include the interpretation of being the victim of violence, and/or homophobic violence, the implication that you are a great sportsman through your brightly coloured sporting-footwear and that will also result in violence, and/or the requirement to prove your constructed performative interpretation of masculinity in this homosocial setting. The implication of this research indicates that in sports

sociology for the first time, an undiscovered/unspoken/under-utilised discourse has been unveiled, which has been posited as a new body of knowledge for the first time, for further scrutiny and academic discussion. This new concept of the sporting-footwear and the constructions of social understanding which are embedded within the performative, the Queered, the Masculine embodied shoe are new, and set the foundations of further discourse.

Another implication of the research is that the role of the sporting-shoe and the social-sporting-shoe, and their connection to embodied performativity in homosocial environments, is a vehicle which bonds men, divides men and reinforces a hegemonic stake in the role of masculinity. The implication here is that sporting-shoes have never been considered before, but that they have a significant role in shaping and modelling masculine bonding experiences in homosocial environments, embedded cultural masculine claims, from a Queered perspective. Through this final point, the role of sporting-footwear is considered to have enabled the researcher to gain idiographic insight into the life experiences and the role of the masculinised sporting-shoe through the IPA lens.

## **6.6 Further Research and Recommendations**

As this thesis draws to a close, it cannot be complete without suggesting recommendations of further empirical research. These recommendations will be discussed in two distinct sections, 'General Recommendations' (6.6.1) and 'Specific Recommendations' (6.6.2). Each point will be briefly discussed in turn.

### **6.6.1 General Recommendations**

The first general recommendation would be the continued and more frequent use of Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) as an analytical tool within qualitative research. As previously stated, IPA is a relatively new qualitative research methodology, and it has only been seventeen years since its first application in qualitative research (Smith, Harre and Langenhove, 1995). Though still in its infancy, IPA has demonstrated that it has versatility and a general

applicability to those wishing to seek the true interpretive voice in the participants they wish to study. The flexibility and the centrality of the researcher throughout the researcher process could be recommended as a very appealing research methodology and approach for those who are inclined to be utilised in their own work in this way. It could also be suggested that methodologies that are consumed, and employed more and more in qualitative research, are then given the opportunity to grow, develop and add to the qualitative philosophical debate.

Secondly, Queer Theory, a post-structuralist critical theory in its current guise, is also a relatively new model of social deconstruction and illumination. As this body of work has demonstrated, Queer Theory and sports sociology, have a very limited relationship. Therefore, the recommendation of this body of work would be to extend this relationship, and integrate the use of Queer Theory into more sports sociological empirical research. It could also be felt that, as this body of work demonstrates, the subordination of men in the sporting environment is a common homosocial experience, and therefore Queer Theory can be utilised in many areas of this type of research whereby men and especially subordinated men (whether that be homosexual or heterosexual) are given visibility and a voice.

### **6.6.2 Specific Recommendations**

Reflecting on this body of research four specific recommendations have been identified a result of the final thematic analysis of the data, and these will each be discussed in turn.

Firstly, it could be recommended that the same research project is undertaken again albeit with a focus on just one sport e.g. bodybuilding, and a focus on one particular group of men who identify themselves as homosexual or heterosexual. Undertaking such an approach might result in fewer participants being utilised, and a more idiographic approach to IPA, but this would appease the notion of a more homogenous group of recruited participants. It also allows the narratives of

a more defined group of men to allow their voice to be heard, while their embodied homosocial environments are deconstructed.

Secondly, if we reflect back over the themes produced from the analysis of data, 'homosocial environments' became a key thematic focus of these results. Therefore, it could be recommended that masculinity in other homosocial environments be researched in more detail, utilising an IPA, masculinity and Queer Theory approach. For example utilising this approach, it could be worth considering masculinity and the discourses in all male gyms for instance, or masculinity and embodied discourse in all boys' schools, both examples of daily homosocial environments. This undertaking of discovering masculinity discourse in uncharted homosocial environments could in itself be a suggested route for postdoctoral research.

Thirdly, from embodied gendered perspective, the role of the 'cock' (5.3.1.1) became a focal point for embodied discourse, as well as a new tenet of Masculine Capital used as a feature of valorisation, in the performative act of male bonding. For this reason, it could be recommended that further research is needed to gain additional insight into discovering the role and discourses surrounding the 'cock' within this context. While reflecting on this point, this body of work mainly exposes the role of a large cock, and that the impact of engaging in sport with a small cock, from this body of work, is unclear. By unpacking these additional narratives, it can only add to the knowledge of the biopolitics of the penis, and this thesis provides a Queered sociological embodied perspective from which to begin.

Fourth and finally, this body of work aimed to have a greater focus on the podolinguistic nature of feet and shoes in sport. It could be argued that methodologically (as previously discussed), this research did not find that the participants wanted to discuss this concept in as much detail as the researcher had previously anticipated (even through undertaking a pilot study). Therefore, it

could be recommended that this body of work has found a perspective through which sportsmen identify with feet and shoes and the role of homosocial environments and the shoe as a social performative space. It could be suggested that this body of work has only just opened this concept up for academic discussion, which means in its infancy further research and insight into the discourses embedded within this model need further unpacking. Through the recommendation of additional research, this could be another insightful area of previously undiscovered research, which could most definitely be utilised for postdoctoral qualitative investigation.

## **6.7 Concluding Remarks**

This thesis has attempted to make sense and explore the interpretive nature of masculinity and 'bulked' body in a homosocial sporting context, utilising a Queer Theoretical perspective, embedded in Masculinity Theory. Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis has successfully provided a methodological tool by which to unpack the lived embodied experiences of men in sport. IPA was able to take participants on a journey from childhood through to adulthood and reflect upon sporting experiences. This body of work has highlighted the importance of homosocial environments, as well as homosociality in the male bonding experiences. The role of hegemonic masculinity and the associated concept of Masculine Capital in policing and shaping future masculinities have been exposed.

It can be noted that this research has closely examined the role of the body and the size of the masculine body, or 'bulk', and its representations of heteronormativity to both homosexual and heterosexual sporting men, while allowing this muscle to become a product of consumption and the passive aesthetic spectacle, through policing men in homosocial environments.

It can also be stated that taking a Queer Theoretical perspective to deconstruct the binaries produced by Masculinity Theories has provided a new and novel way

to deconstruct the intersectionality of the social constructions of masculinity, and the embodied narratives of heterosexual and homosexual sporting men. This research in its finality has offered up a concept of considering the role of the walk/feet/shoes triad, and its connected importance to the embodied performative role of masculinity, by highlighting it as a homosocial experience as well as a social-performative environment.

Finally, reflecting back to the relationship between Thomas, Cohen and Owens, and taking into consideration other sportsmen in the homosocial sporting context, new insight has been gained. This body of work believes it has filled a gap in an under-scrutinised area of sport, and feels it has laid the foundation for future empirical studies.

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## APPENDIX A: LETTER OF ETHICAL CLEARANCE



Christopher Morriss  
School of Health and Biosciences, Stratford

ETH/11/19  
27 April 2013

Dear Christopher,

**Application to the Research Ethics Committee: Critical Ethnographical Research of the Foot and Shoe in Sexuality and Rugby: ( C Morriss ).**

I advise that Members of the Research Ethics Committee have now approved the above application on the terms previously advised to you. The Research Ethics Committee should be informed of any significant changes that take place after approval has been given. Examples of such changes include any change to the scope, methodology or composition of investigative team. These examples are not exclusive and the person responsible for the programme must exercise proper judgement in determining what should be brought to the attention of the Committee.

In accepting the terms previously advised to you I would be grateful if you could return the declaration form below, duly signed and dated, confirming that you will inform the committee of any changes to your approved programme.

Yours sincerely

Simiso Jubane  
Admission and Ethics Officer  
s.jubane@uel.ac.uk  
02082232976

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**Research Ethics Committee: ETH/11/19**

I hereby agree to inform the Research Ethics Committee of any changes to be made to the above approved programme and any adverse incidents that arise during the conduct of the programme.

Signed:.....Date: .....

Please Print Name:



# RESEARCH

PARTICIPANTS WANTED FOR SPORT SOCIOLOGY RESEARCH



*Are you are a keen sportsman?  
Are you interested in talking to someone about being a man  
in sport?*

EMAIL OR CALL CHRISTOPHER MORRISS NOW  
[C.MORRISS@UEL.AC.UK](mailto:C.MORRISS@UEL.AC.UK) OR 07841339043

## APPENDIX C: RECRUITMENT EMAIL

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am a Senior Lecturer in Podiatry from the University of East London, undertaking a PhD thesis looking at sexuality/masculinity in footwear and sport.

I am writing regarding the possibility of recruiting one of your sportsmen, to take part in my thesis to discuss the issues surrounding masculinity/sexuality and footwear. This would involve an interview lasting up to an hour.

I have attached a poster, which you could possibly pin in your locker room or email out to your sports team.

I would be more than grateful if you would endeavour to help me with the recruitment of a participant for my thesis. If you would like more information, please contact me and I will send you some in-depth information.

Please find a link below to my University web page.

I look forward to hearing from you in the near future.

Most Kindest,

Chris Morriss

Christopher Morriss BSc(Hons)Pod

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## APPENDIX D: INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS



### Information Sheet for Participants

#### **University of East London**

Stratford Campus  
Romford Road  
Stratford, E15 4LZ

#### **Programme of Study: PhD**

Dear Participant,

Thank you for taking an interest in participating in this research. Before you decide whether to consent and continue it would be beneficial for you to read the following material; it might contain some questions you wish you had already asked.

#### **University Research Ethics Committee**

If you have any queries regarding the conduct of the programme in which you are being asked to participate please contact the Secretary of the University Research Ethics Committee: Ms D Dada, Administrative Officer for Research, Graduate School, University of East London, Docklands Campus. London E16 2RD (telephone 0208 223 2976 email [d.dada@uel.ac.uk](mailto:d.dada@uel.ac.uk))

**The Principle Investigator**

Name: Christopher Morriss  
Address: University of East London  
School of Health and Bioscience  
Room 4.06, Stratford Campus,  
Romford Road  
Stratford, E15 4LZ  
Telephone: 020 8223 2075  
Mobile: 07841339043  
Email: [c.morriss@uel.ac.uk](mailto:c.morriss@uel.ac.uk)

**Consent to Participate in a Research Study**

The purpose of this letter is to provide you with the information that you need to consider in deciding whether to participate in this study.

**Project Title**

**"Big and Pumped: Embodied Masculinity in Homosocial Sporting Environments"**

**Project Description****What is the point of this research?**

This research hopes to look at how sportsmen feel about being a man (straight and gay) and its relationship to the sport they perform in. The research will then develop further by questioning the relationship that a sportsman has with their feet and shoes and the links that are made to masculinity/performance/injury/fashion and sexual identity.

**What will you have to do as a participant?**

This research involves an individual interview.

During the interview you will be asked to tell stories about your feelings/experiences as a sportsman in relation to the key themes that are being investigated e.g. masculinity/performance/injury/feet/shoes/fashion and sexual identity. There is no pressure to answer any question if you do not wish to do so, however, at times you might be asked more probing questions in response to your answers. While the interview is taking place, it will be recorded using a digital recording device; this should not have any impact on the interview procedure. The interview should take no longer than one hour; however there may be a chance that the interview could run under or over this time frame.

**Will taking part in this research cause you any harm?**

Taking part in this research will not cause you any harm at all, however, if you feel you wish to withdraw from either the observational or interview part of the research project; you are free to do so at anytime without giving a reason.

**How will you keep my identity confidential?**

Your data will be kept confidential in accordance with the Data Protection Act (1998). The interviews and any transcriptions that are made from the interview tapes will be kept in a locked safe place, which only the primary researcher will have access to. The transcriptions will be coded so that your identity will be kept anonymous.

Once the research has been completed, the recorded interviews and transcripts from the completed thesis will be stored for 10 years before being destroyed, in a safe/secured place that only the primary researcher will have access to.

**Where will the research take place?**

The interviews will take place at a venue convenient to you, no extra travel will be necessary.

**Will refreshments be provided?**

No

**Disclaimer**

You are not obliged to take part in this study, and are free to withdraw at any time during the tests. Should you choose to withdraw from the programme you may do so without disadvantage to yourself and without any obligation to give a reason.

I hope the above questions have answered any queries that you may have. Please feel free to ask me any questions at any time in relation to the research that you are about to become a participant in.

Kind Regards,

**Christopher Morriss**

Christopher Morriss

Senior Lecturer, Podiatrist and PhD Student



## **APPENDIX E: CONSENT FORM TO PARTICIPATE**



### **UNIVERSITY OF EAST LONDON**

**The School of Health and Bioscience  
Professional Health Sciences**

### **Consent to Participate/Publish in an Experimental Programme Involving the Use of Human Participants**

#### **“Big and Pumped: Embodied Masculinity in Homosocial Sporting Environments”**

I have read the information leaflet relating to the above programme of research in which I have been asked to participate and have been given a copy to keep. The nature and purposes of the research have been explained to me, and I have had the opportunity to discuss the details and ask questions about this information. I understand what is being proposed and the procedures in which I will be involved have been explained to me.

I understand that my involvement in this study, and particular data from this research, will remain strictly confidential. Only the researchers involved in the study will have access to the data; however the data will be used for PhD publication as a PhD thesis and in peer reviewed journals. It has been explained

to me what will happen to the data once the experimental programme has been completed.

1. I hereby fully and freely consent to participate in the study which has been fully explained to me.
2. I hereby fully and freely consent to the publication of the data whereby my name and personal information will be concealed to hide my identity.

Having given this consent I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the programme at any time without disadvantage to myself and without being obliged to give any reason.

Participant's name (BLOCK CAPITALS): .....

Participant's signature: .....

Investigator's name: .....

Investigator's signature: .....

Date: .....

## APPENDIX F: PROPOSED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

### **Proposed Interview Schedule for Sporting Participants**

*The study has a story like methodology, a structured bank of questions are needed to develop the narrative interview schedule.*

Could you tell me about a time when you first became interested in sport?

What did you think about the men in sport; can you think about how they impacted on you?

Could you tell me if your sport makes you feel more masculine? If so could you tell me a story about a time when it made you feel more masculine?

Does your sexuality have an impact on the way that you perform in sport?

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Could you tell me a time when your body seemed to fail you in the sport?

How did you deal with this failing?

Did it make you feel less of a man?

How do you connect with your body in the locker room environment?

Do you find the locker room intimidating?

Could you tell me about a time when your feet seemed to fail you in the sport?

Have you ever had any foot injuries/pathologies and could you tell me about them?

How do you feel about your feet and their role in sport?

What is a masculine foot? Does it have a role in sport?

---

Could you tell me a time when footwear impacted on your performance/game?

Do you remember buying your first pair of boots? Tell me about it?

Did your choice of boot brand change as you got older?

Could you tell me about any particular features that you look for in a boot?

Do you ever modify your boots to make you play better?

Do you feel that your boots make you perform better? If so tell me more about it?

Do you think that your manliness is linked to the boots you wear?

Are there any rugby boots out there that are less manly? Tell me about these?

If you could design your own pair of boots what would these look like?

## APPENDIX G: LAYOUT OF TRANSCRIPT FOR ANALYSIS

Initial Themes	Original Transcript Interview S1	Exploratory Comments
	<p>S1: My first experience in sport .....</p> <p>I: That you remember quite clearly....</p> <p>S1 It was my first session that I went to and we started up a new football team that was starting up. My dad had gone through newspapers and stuff like that to try and find a team for me, cause he was always interested in getting me into football. Ummm..... Ive gone along and I enjoyed the session a lot, the coach there was really nice, there was not necessarily any forcefulness or nothing like that, it was just going through drills and things trying to make it fun like.</p> <p>I: to design your own pair of football boots, what would they look like?</p> <p>S1: eeerrr.....i like the idea of having them quite plain, my favourite boot at the moment, like a</p>	